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E.M. Forster: A Tribute (ed.)
The Legacy of Nehru (ed.)
Tales from Modern India (ed.)
Maharaja Suraj Mal: 1707-1763

CURTAIN RAISERS
Essays, Reviews, Letters

K NATWAR-SINGH

Sometimes, it seems to me, I have succeeded fairly well in doing what, in one field or another, I had set out to do. Sometimes, alas, I knew that I have not succeeded ... For the writer at least, and perhaps also for the reader, it is better to have tried and failed to achieve perfection than never to have tried at all.

— *Aldous Huxley*



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PREFATORY NOTE

THESE ESSAYS AND REVIEWS were written over the past twenty-five years in different parts of the world. There is inevitably some repetition in a miscellany of this kind. I have not attempted to touch up or tidy up anything, not even a phrase which occurs in more than one place. I have, however, omitted some names from the Letters, so as not to give offence to people who are living.

Not all miscellanies hold together. I hope this one does and binds the three sections.

Some of the essays and most of the reviews were written for publications outside India. The Indian reader may, therefore, find that at times I have stated the obvious. Much as we would like to delude ourselves, knowledge about India and Indian affairs is neither deep nor widespread in many parts of the world.

I am afraid the reader will probably get an overdose of E.M. Forster. I owe him a very great debt. He opened several doors which had been closed. When I first met him, he was a world-famous 75, and I was not quite 25. He encouraged me to write. His motto, "Only connect . . ." appealed to me. Through him I made friends with many remarkable and creative people. But for him, I doubt if I would have met (or done so, so early in my life) Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Narayana Menon, Santha Rama Rau and Ahmed Ali.

Abroad, the reviews have appeared in The New York Times Book Review, The Saturday Review, The Sunday Times, New Statesman and The Financial Times; in India, in The Times of India, The Illustrated Weekly of India, The Hindustan Times and The Weekend Review. I thought I ought to mention one particular review, that of Freedom at Midnight by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, which I reviewed for The Sunday Times, London. Mr Malcolm Muggeridge did so for The Observer. Independently, we came to the conclusion that Freedom at Midnight was not serious history. The book did not do too well in England. Elsewhere

it was a runaway best-seller. I was, therefore, amused to see on the cover of the English paperback edition a quote from my review, – "a vast and complex canvas .... rich in vivid detail", but without mentioning my name!!

The Letters – all to me – form the most important and lively section of the book. I am grateful to the authors for permitting me to use them. Only in the case of Han Suyin have I felt the need to provide a brief note. Our friendship began in somewhat comic circumstances. I thought I should share those with the reader.

These epistles throw some light on the personality of each writer and also on mine. Breaking intellectual and emotional bread with people who are imaginative, original, sensitive, genuine, unselfish, pure of heart, honourable, who can take a joke and laugh at themselves, has been an exciting, liberating, stimulating, life-enhancing experience. In their company one felt buoyant and fully alive. I often marvel at my good fortune, and constantly thank the Cosmic Master for having dealt me such a good hand.

I have resisted the temptation to include my letters to these famous and distinguished friends of mine. No, it isn't modesty – I don't consider modesty a high virtue. After all, what is modesty? – conceit wrapped up in sheep's clothing. It is simply that my letters do not transcend ordinariness. That I have the good sense to know this, is a healthy sign.

I wish to thank Mrs AshaRani Mathur for her expert editorial advice and help.

K. Natwar-Singh

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PART ONE: ESSAYS

1. THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.—*Albert Einstein*

Our country gave birth to a mighty soul and he shone like a beacon not only for India but for the whole world....wherever he sat became a Temple and where he trod was hallowed ground.—*Jawaharlal Nehru*

A very great man I have called him. He is likely to be the greatest of our century.—*E.M. Forster*

THE WALLS OF THE elegant corridor leading to President Kaunda's Library at State House are adorned by the photographs of his great contemporaries; Emperors, Kings, Presidents, Prime Ministers, familiar and formidable countenances of rulers of nations. But there is also a photograph of Mahatma Gandhi who was none of these things and yet greater than all of them put together. This is not to belittle these leaders of men and nations or their ex officio and institutionalised authority but merely to emphasise that their kingdoms are of this world. Mahatma Gandhi's was not.

The more one looks around the world and contemplates the blood-soaked international scene, the more aware one becomes of Gandhi's achievement, his contribution to extending and uplifting our spiritual horizons, enriching mankind's impoverished stock of the higher virtues.

It is perilous for saints to venture into politics or for politicians to appear in saintly garb, but Gandhi even in his political avatar comes out with clean hands. While he may not have succeeded in spiritualising politics he certainly purified them. Thus the standards set by the Indian Freedom Movement under him became a touchstone for other movements in different parts of the globe.

What is the yardstick by which the greatness of an individual is judged? Personal qualities, character, integrity,

political achievement. All these tests the Mahatma passes with flying colours. But the most important test which an individual has to pass before he can be classed truly great is: Did his life in any way change the world? Gandhi changed India and when you change a country of 400 million people (population of undivided India in 1947) you inevitably unleash revolutionary and powerful forces. In Asia and Africa millions of suppressed and oppressed people looked to Gandhi for hope and inspiration. The world would never be the same again. Gandhi's revolution was based on the bedrock of truth, love, service and non-violence. The sources of its inspiration are to be found in the Gita, the Bible, the Koran and other great religious books of the world, not in the pages of Marx or in the little red book which once became such a best-seller in Peking.

Mahatma Gandhi went to South Africa in May 1893. His original idea was to go for a year, "to try my luck" as a Barrister. He stayed twenty-one years. What the 24-year-old Inner Temple Barrister saw horrified him. In the Transvaal and the Orange Free State the Indians had been deprived of all rights. The colour bar was rampant and he was known to the whites as the "coolie Barrister". In 1894 he founded the Natal Indian Congress, the first ever non-white organisation of its kind in Africa. He gave up his law practice to do full-time political and social work and bring together the feuding factions of the Indian community. He started and edited **Indian Opinion**, wrote **Hind Swaraj** (Indian Home Rule), corresponded with Tolstoy, the great author of **War and Peace**. But it was Tolstoy's **The Kingdom of God is Within You** that made a profound impression on Gandhi, as did Ruskin's **Unto this Last** and Thoreau's essay, **Civil Disobedience**. The Gita, the Upanishads, the Bible and the Koran formed his daily spiritual diet. He suffered imprisonment for organising civil disobedience against Pass Laws and during his third detention, received in jail two religious books from General Smuts of all people. The two met a number of times and their mutual regard transcended their political differences.

He returned to India in 1914, known but not famous, respected but not yet revered. During the 1914-18 war he did nothing to embarrass the British Indian Government and

thought it immoral to use Britain's difficulty as India's opportunity. He innocently hoped that after the war Britain would announce measures which would rapidly lead to self-rule. In this he, along with millions of his countrymen, was disappointed. Repression was increased and the massacre at Jalianwala Bagh, Amritsar was the last straw. 379 people were shot dead in cold blood by General Dyer in April 1919.

After this Gandhi lost faith in the word of the British authorities and came on the Indian political scene like a cloud-burst. The Indian National Congress had been founded in 1885 but had remained on the whole an upper class debating society of well-dressed gentlemen who concluded their annual gathering by singing, "God save the King". Gandhi wanted to save India. He turned the Congress into a mass movement. Non-violent non-cooperation was to be used against the British Raj. India, which had been lying prostrate, devoid of hope and light, responded magnificently. There was a birth of a new and unique awakening, under a unique leader. Although the British did not leave India till 1947, the British empire was on the run once Gandhi had openly defied and disobeyed the unjust laws and unjustifiable practices of that Empire and challenged Britain's right to hang on to India against the wishes of the people. Gandhi had an amazing gift to gauge the mood of the Indian people. Without the aid of P.R. agencies, the telephone, the radio, the T.V. or the jet plane he got his message across to the remotest parts of India.

Sooner rather than later the British had to act to prevent Gandhi from preaching "disaffection" against the King and he was charged and brought to trial on 18 March 1922 in the city of Ahmedabad. The charge was of "bringing or attempting to bring into hatred or contempt or exciting or attempting to excite disaffection towards His Majesty's Government" The judge Mr N.C. Broomfield has secured a place in history for reasons which will soon become clear.

Mahatma Gandhi pleaded guilty to the charges made by the Advocate-General and added, "I have no desire whatsoever to conceal from this court the fact that to preach disaffection towards the existing system of government has become a passion with me.... He [the Advocate-General] is quite right when he says that as a man having received a fair

share of education, having received a fair share of experience of this world, I should have known the consequences of every one of my acts. I knew that I was playing with fire.... I wanted to avoid violence. NON-VIOLENCE IS THE FIRST ARTICLE OF MY FAITH. IT IS ALSO THE LAST ARTICLE OF MY CREED. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered had done irreparable harm to my country, or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth when they understood the truth from my lips. I am deeply sorry for it and I am therefore here to submit not to a light penalty but to the highest penalty. I do not ask for mercy. I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here, therefore, to invite and cheerfully submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, the Judge, is either to resign your post or inflict on me the severest penalty, if you believe that the system and law you are assisting to administer are good for the people. I do not expect that kind of conversion, but by the time I have finished with my statement, you will perhaps have a glimpse of what is raging within my breast.... My public life began in 1893 in South Africa, in troubled weather. My first contact with British authority in that country was not of a happy character. I discovered that as a man and an Indian I had no rights. More correctly, I discovered that I had no rights as a man, because I was an Indian...." Then followed a severe and unanswerable indictment of British rule in India.

Gandhi was sentenced to six years' imprisonment but in passing judgement Judge Broomfield conscious that history was in the making rose to the occasion. He said, "Mr Gandhi, you have made my task in one way easy by pleading guilty to the charge. Nevertheless, what remains, namely, the determination of a just sentence, is perhaps as difficult a proposition as a judge in this country could have to face. The law is no respecter of persons. Nevertheless, it will be impossible to ignore the fact that you are in a different category from any person I have ever tried or am likely to have to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that, in the eyes of millions of your countrymen, you are a great patriot and a great

leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and even saintly life. I have to deal with you in one character only.... You will not consider it unreasonable, I think, that you should be classed with Mr Tilak, i.e. a sentence of two years' simple imprisonment on each count of the charge, six years in all.... and I should like to say.... if the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I." Rare stuff.

The rest is history. While in prison Mahatma Gandhi wrote one of the seminal books of the century, The Story of my Experiments with Truth. A quarter of a century later he led India to freedom but with freedom came the sorrow of partition to prevent which Gandhiji did everything humanly possible. On August 15th, 1947 when Nehru spoke of "our tryst with destiny", Gandhi was a thousand miles away bringing hope and succour to the victims of communal frenzy. Six months later he was shot dead in Delhi while on his way to his daily prayer meeting. As he fell to the ground his last words were "He Raam" – Oh God! Time, 5 minutes past 5 p.m., 30 January 1948.

India mourned, the world mourned. History mourned. He did not die in vain. His death ensured the secular nature of the Indian Republic, a better deal for the scheduled castes and tribes, a prominent role for women in society. Albert Luthuli in South Africa, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, Martin Luther King in America carried forward his message. Each people fight and win their battles of freedom with their own efforts but without the great example of Gandhi their task would have been infinitely more difficult. Seldom have so many owed so much in so many lands to one man.

Published in *The Times of Zambia*, 1979

2. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

WHEN JAWAHARLAL NEHRU BECAME Prime Minister of India on 15 August 1947, I was in my mid-teens. Thus my testimony is useful perhaps in terms of my own generation.

My generation – the inter-war – was totally captivated by the person of Jawaharlal Nehru. Even more than Mahatma Gandhi, he influenced and altered our lives. He was our mentor and hero. In him our dreams and destiny coincided, and "he drew these tides of men into his hands and wrote his will across the sky in stars."

The vision of India that I and millions like me have is his gift. The idealism that we possess is of his doing. That India and her people continue to receive the world's attention and affection in such large measure is a tribute to his life and work.

He rid us of fear, superstition and cant. He taught us to be modern without ceasing to respect our ancient past. He gave us at once pride and humility. By his example and disarming candour he raised the level and quality of national and international dialogue and proved to us that private decencies can be transmitted to public affairs. A politician, he never cared to tidy his past. There was nothing to tidy up. He was his own most intelligent and unsparing critic. His character was complex and there were contradictory elements in it but this is not the time or the place to analyse his character or catalogue his mistakes.

He had courage, wisdom, learning, compassion, charity, simplicity, style, grace, a deep sense of loyalty, wit, goodness and tolerance. He loved poetry, books, birds, mountains and nature. He loved challenges. He loved children. He was exquisitely sensitive. His interest in literature was very deep. He read widely, particularly when he was in prison. He cared for the arts and was happy in the company of writers and creative people. He could be impulsive. He also had great restraint. He was beautiful and he was the most civilised of us all. Rightly did we give our hearts to him. That we did not always follow him is his tragedy and our indignity.

I was never intimate with him personally. There are thousands who were closer to him, many more who knew him before I was born. But I did have the great privilege of being in his presence many many times. I have stood in pouring rain and ankle-deep mud — one of half a million — to listen to his Red Fort speeches. I have also been alone with him — the last time in a Manhattan hotel. At least on one occasion I caused him some annoyance. But each time, regardless, I felt that my own young life had been enriched, enlarged and uplifted. He did that to people who came into contact with him. His books have the same effect.

Mankind will pause before his unique achievement. After him there are certain things which simply cannot be done, and his life remains his best testimonial. I end this memoir by recalling two incidents which I treasure and which show what a truly gracious and great man he was.

It was the lunch hour on a hot summer day in 1961, and as if by magical coincidence, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and I met in the corridor of the Ministry of External Affairs. I greeted him with folded hands with a book between my two palms. He stopped, returned my greetings, and asked me what the book was. I handed it over to him. It was Amaury de Riencourt's The Soul of China.

Mr Nehru said, "I have read his Soul of India."

"So have I, Sir."

The Prime Minister took a few steps towards the majestic staircase of the Foreign Office and remarked, "Rather Spenglerian, I thought."

I gave a nervous smile, and having never read Spengler, did not say anything.

He then walked on and as he was walking down the steps he looked around and said with a twinkle in his eyes, "Nehru Imperator, hm!"

This was Jawaharlal Nehru at his spontaneous best. The great man was sharing a little joke with me, as I had read The Soul of India, which carries a chapter entitled, "Nehru Imperator".

Since Mr. Nehru was in such a pleasant mood, I dared to catch up with him and ask him whether he had seen a book on him by Mr. X. He said he had, but did not care very much for it. I was glad the book existed, for after all "it was a

labour of love."

"Talking of a labour of love," he said, "reminds me that Dorothy Norman has been working on a book on me for several years. She has a huge amount of material and has almost everything that I have ever written or spoken."

I asked if the book was likely to be published in the near future.

Mr Nehru said, "I don't know how far she has got with it."

I vaguely remember mumbling to myself that she had obviously a long way to go as it was difficult to keep up with the Prime Minister's speech-making. I don't think he heard, although he did give me an enquiring but entirely lovable look and stepped into his car.

Mr Nehru last visited New York in November 1961. He had just celebrated his seventy-second birthday, but his schedule would have and did exhaust those twenty years younger. Still he found time to see the musical Camelot. After the show he went backstage and Mr Richard Burton introduced him to the other members of the cast. They all enjoyed meeting him and he them. When he got back to the hotel, it was past midnight. He asked me to call his secretary. I called but there was no response from his room. The Prime Minister had every reason to be annoyed, and I expected an explosion but none occurred.

Instead he said, "Don't bother. The poor man must be tired and has probably gone to bed."

"Could I do anything?" I asked.

He smiled, put his hand on my shoulder, and speaking softly said, "Young man, you too have had a long day, so run along and get some sleep. I will go up and look after myself, but tell them to have my breakfast ready at eight in the morning."

Thus ended an evening full of splendour yet free of formality. I left deeply moved, and still wonder if only we all could be so considerate, wouldn't life be a little less gray!

The news of his death was so unexpected. A week earlier he had told a Press conference in Delhi: "My life is not coming to an end so soon."

I was overwhelmed with grief and unashamedly I wept. The world suddenly lost some of its glow and much of its

sanity. He is not there anymore but his noble and fragrant memory endures and I feel that his concern for us, in so many ways, follows us beyond the funeral pyre.

Published in *The Legacy of Nehru*, Ed. by K. Natwar-Singh, New York, John Day 1965

3. R.K. NARAYAN'S TRYST WITH NEHRU

IT WAS EARLY MARCH 1961. R.K. Narayan had come to Delhi to receive his Sahitya Akademi Award for The Guide. He and I had not met for six years. My only encounter with him had been in Mysore in 1955. It was made memorable by his asking me if I were Khushwant Singh's brother. Mildly, only mildly did I protest adding that, "All Sikhs were Singhs but all Singhs were not Sikhs."

In the intervening half dozen years his name and fame grew. In his 50th year he left Mysore to travel abroad for the first time. I, in the meanwhile, did a spell in Peking. I also wrote something on him and kept in touch with his writings.

On his arrival in Delhi, to my surprise, Narayan contacted me through our mutual friend Krishna Kripalani.

I was rather charmed on discovering that R.K.N. had never been to Delhi before. He said he hated "official" cities. Celebrity had not changed him; that happens to spurious talents with spurious personalities. I asked him if there was anything I could do for him during his stay in Delhi.

"Two things," was the laconic reply. Being young and brash I said, "O.K. what are they?"

"Show me the rose garden in Rashtrapati Bhavan and take me to Pandit Nehru."

I was floored. The Rashtrapati Bhavan part was not insurmountable but to get at Pandit Nehru at short notice was quite another matter. I tried to wriggle out by reminding Narayan that Mr Nehru would be presenting the Sahitya Akademi Award to him where he would have a chance to meet the great man. Narayan said he did not like crowds and wished to meet Jawaharlal Nehru at Teen Murti House. So that was that.

Through the help of S.P. Khanna, Panditji's Private Secretary, a meeting was fixed at Teen Murti House. The simple splendour of the place impressed Narayan. On the dot of 9.00 Nehru came down, immaculate, glowing, fragrant. What a presence he had. Even those who came to jeer returned to cheer. He had changed our lives and given it purpose and direction. The imperatives of ambition had never been

allowed to triumph over the dictates of conscience. After greeting one or two other visitors Mr Nehru walked towards us. R.K. said, "How do I greet him? Will he shake hands with me or should I fold my hands? The mechanics of life defeat me." By that time Mr Nehru had reached us. "R.K. Narayan, Sir," I said. He put out his hand. R.K. folded his and said "Namashkar" and then nervously shook Mr Nehru's hand.

"What have you got there?" he enquired of R.K. "This is my latest novel which has just been published by the Viking Press in America and I wished to give it to you." He handed the book to Mr Nehru who read the title aloud, The Man Eater of Malgudi. "I do not get any time to read novels now and I have not written anything for years, but my daughter has read some of your books and I have a niece who also writes. What is this book about?" R.K. said it was about a taxidermist who creates a lot of trouble in a small village. I intervened, "It is high comedy Sir, free of all 'isms'." R.K. then said he was most grateful to the Prime Minister for sparing time to see him. Nehru said that he would have liked to spend more time with him but had to rush to Parliament. He enquired how Narayan was spending his time in Delhi. I informed him of his two priorities, first the roses and then the P.M. Mr Nehru was amused adding, "I am one of the sights of Delhi. Do you know Delhi at all?"

R.K.N. – "Never been here before."

J.N. –(pleasantly surprised) "I thought everybody got here sooner or later on some jaunt or the other."

R.K.N. – "My writing keeps me busy in Mysore and till now I had no particular business that would have got me to Delhi."

J.N. – "You might have a look at the albums of this year's Republic Day parade which somebody brought me this morning."

He then showed R.K. the photographs. Shrimati Indira Gandhi joined us and Mr Nehru left saying, "She will take care of you" and she did. We had superb coffee and small eats and she talked about books, travel and literature. A superlative hostess, she put Narayan completely at ease. He was quite bowled over.

Before Mr Nehru left, a photographer had appeared from

nowhere. Nehru, the public hero had suddenly been transformed into the artist he was. Not much was said, not much needed to be said. Nehru and Narayan had "connected". That I should have had a hand in arranging their brief encounter continues to give me great pleasure.

When R.K.N.'s autobiography, My Days, appeared, I found no mention of the Narayan-Nehru meeting, although my name was mentioned in connection with another less important but much more dramatic incident. When he came to stay with us in London, some months after My Days came out, I asked, "How could you leave out your meeting with Nehru?" Calmly he replied, "It never occurred to me give publicity to it, and in any case I could not weave it into the narrative. My Days is a literary work, not a political tract." All I could say was that modesty could be but need not be carried to extremes.

1979

4. PRINCE, PATRIOT, PUBLIC SERVANT

IF YOUR NAME IS Lt. Gen. His Highness Forzand-i-Khas, Daulat-i-Inglisha, Mansur-i-Zaman, Amir-ul-Umra, Maharaja-dhiraj Raj Rajeshwar, Sri Maharaja-i-Rajgan, Sir Yadavindra Singhji Mahindar Bahadur, GCIE, GCVO, GBE, LLD, etc. and if you happen to be the supreme ruler of two million people, if your state has an area of 5,600 square miles; if you are a recipient of a Hukam Nama from the Tenth Guru; if your palace has more rooms than the palace of Versailles, if you have more servants than Louis XIV and if you have married one of the most beautiful women in the land and have two handsome sons and two lovely daughters and if you yourself are the most handsome and impressive looking man that ever was, then you really have got it made and there will always be spring in your garden. In the circumstances, no one expects you to be normal or to change your life style in mid-stream. But change did come and very suddenly.

My father-in-law combined royal upbringing with normalcy in a unique way. He was a prince who possessed the common touch. He felt at home everywhere and with all people. It also fell to his lot to change gear in mid-life. He did so with dignity, grace, style, minimum of bitterness and in a public spirited manner. At a crucial time in the history of the country the lead he gave to his fellow princes and the example he set ensures him a place in contemporary Indian history. In 1947, he was 33 years old. As Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes he negotiated with Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel, Lord Mountbatten and Mr Jinnah. The entire power structure in India was about to undergo a fundamental change. The atmosphere was surcharged, the stakes were high. A wrong step could have led to personal disaster and public disapproval. The opportunities and temptations for taking the wrong turning were available, but the basic patriotism of the young Maharaja triumphed. The attempts to create a third force among the princes were defeated by the decisive lead he and Maharaja Sadul Singh of Bikaner gave to the princes by announcing early in 1947 their

decision to enter the Constituent Assembly and to throw in their lot with India.

Both as the leader of the Sikh community in India and also as the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, a grave responsibility was placed on Maharaja Yadavinder Singh. Any hesitation on his part would have created a very difficult situation at a very difficult time. But it never occurred to him to ally himself with the forces of reaction or disintegration. Mr Jinnah offered him an independent Sikhistan and he turned it down without a minute's hesitation. As human memory is both short and selective it is worth recalling Sardar Patel's tribute to Maharaja Yadavinder Singh:

> I must mention the notable contribution which H.H. the Maharaja of Patiala made to the unity and integrity of India. He took up the cause of the country at a time when there were few friends amongst the Princely Order and when serious attempts were being made to balkanise India by means of one or more Rajasthans. **It was his patriotic lead that contributed in a large measure to a change in the attitude of the Princes to the problem of accession to the Indian Dominion.**

Such was the man who became my father-in-law on 21 August 1967. I was then working in the Prime Minister's Secretariat. I informed Shrimati Indira Gandhi about my marriage plans. I decided to have a civil marriage and requested Mrs Gandhi to be the principal witness at our wedding. She graciously agreed.

I then told my future wife to ask her distinguished father's permission and I thought there would be very great resistance from that quarter. I was pleasantly surprised when he readily consented, gently suggesting that it might be a good idea to have a Sikh marriage ceremony following the civil marriage. To this I immediately agreed. I was deeply impressed by his secularism and his modern outlook. After all, I was asking him to break a 300-year old tradition in his family. Later I also discovered how deeply religious he was. When we went to Patiala after our wedding, he took us to the Old Fort and showed me Guru Gobind Singh's Hukam Nama and 22

weapons that the Guru had sent to his ancestors. "All the family position and prestige is a gift from the Guru," he informed me.

During the next seven years, I saw much of him at close quarters and at times under trying circumstances. Never once did I hear him speak derisively of anyone or indulge in self-pity or remorse. He was trained to hide his emotions. He had none of his father's legendary flamboyance or his reprehensible extravagance, politely referred to as "generosity" in the Patiala palace. Like most good men, he was a hopeless judge of other men. Although brought up in an atmosphere of intrigue he was unable to promote or sustain one. Similarly, like men who inherit great wealth, he did not know how to handle money and was throughout his life fleeced by sharks and low adventurers. His religion and his secularism were a vital part of his being and he combined the two with effortless ease and minimum fanfare. He was free from the nastier human emotions – envy, greed, vanity, cruelty. Perhaps as a reaction to his father's excessive hedonism, he was moderate in his habits and his manners were exquisite.

After he ceased to be the Rajpramukh of PEPSU in 1956, the graph of his public career began its downward trend. Had he been a skilful operator, he might have landed some of the plum jobs in the Indian political arena. But fate willed otherwise and lesser office came his way. He was a member of the Indian delegation to the United Nations in New York in 1957 where his charismatic personality attracted so much attention that the leader of the Indian delegation did not commit the error of inviting him again to join the delegation. He represented India with great distinction at the FAO in Rome for a number of years. He continued his deep interest in Indian agriculture, horticulture and sport. Dozens of Indian sportsmen owe their eminence and careers to his patronage.

As head of the Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh Foundations, he kept in close touch with Sikh affairs. At the time of the Chinese invasion in 1962 and the war with Pakistan in 1965, he visited Sikh troops at various fronts. His elder son Amarindar Singh saw action during both conflicts. The two daughters of the Maharaja nursed wounded soldiers at the Military Hospital in Delhi Cantonement. These included the younger daughter's fiance Major Billy Dhillon, who

was severely wounded and spent nearly two years recuperating.

His tenure as Ambassador in Italy was brief as was his entry in Punjab politics in 1967. He won the Patiala Assembly seat by a record margin. All his opponents lost their deposits. But he soon found that State politics was a "mixture of the squalid and the incomprehensible", and resigned the seat.

1970 perhaps was the most frustrating year of his life. Once again his patriotism and judgement made him take the right decisions. He refused to have anything to do with the Concord of Princes and privately advised his brother Princes not to misjudge the temper of the times. They did not heed his advice and paid the price. He was deeply grieved when the princes were derecognised and felt betrayed and anchorless but he accepted the decisions of Government and Parliament with stoic grace and dignity. His paramount desire was to serve his country in whatever capacity he could and when invited to go as Ambassador to Holland he readily accepted.

I was at the time Ambassador in Poland. My wife, I and our children spent a part of the summer of 1972 and 1973 with him. Just as the test of a politician's greatness comes after his fall from power, the test of a prince comes after he has lost his kingdom. This test he passed with eclat.

He was a great host and very popular at the Hague. He did his job well even though at times he found it exasperating to take orders from individuals who were obscure junior officials whereas he was a full-fledged Maharaja. It was for me a great lesson in modesty, restraint and high discipline, to see a man of his stature getting engrossed in the running of a small Embassy. It was a far cry from the grandeur of the glittering court of Patiala.

My wife implored him to write his autobiography and he finally relented. After his death she found in his papers the unfinished manuscript. On the title page was quoted his favourite saying:

> To sin by silence when one should protest makes cowards out of men. Let him who dares, speak and speak again, to right the wrongs of men. They say what they say, let them say.

He died on 17 June. An hour before his death, he had spoken to me. Towards the end of the month he was to have come to London to discuss his book with Lord Mountbatten who on hearing the news of his death said: "With his passing away is gone the last of the great Indian Princes and a great Indian."

He was cremated in his beloved city of Patiala on the 21st of June 1974. On the hottest and longest day of the year, a quarter of a million people turned out to pay their homage to this remarkable man who had lived a life and not an apology.

1975

5. CHAUDHURI CHHOTU RAM: AN APPRAISAL

COURAGE, CHARACTER, COMPASSION, CLARITY. Today these words perish on our lips. Reflecting on the life and achievement of the greatest Haryanvi of the 20th century Chaudhuri Chhotu Ram, they come constantly to mind. The sources of his inspiration never ran dry, his secular vision was never clouded. In his single-minded dedication to improving the lot of his people he never wavered. He believed in his own star and destiny. He often quoted from Iqbal:

खुदी को कर बुलन्द इतना कि हर तकदीर से पहले।
खुदा बन्दे से खुद पूछे, बता तेरी रजा क्या है॥

Raise thyself to such mighty heights that God himself shall ask thee, what destiny wilt thou have.

The great Russian poet and novelist Boris Pasternak wrote somewhere, "Things that exist in their own absolute right have no need for a pedigree." Chaudhuri Chhotu Ram was not born to fame and fortune. He was a completely self-made man. His fame was not inherited, it was earned and acquired by sustained hard work against heavy odds.

He was born on 24 November, 1881 at Garhi Sampla in Rohtak district. His father Ch. Sukhi Ram belonged to the Ohlan gotra of Jats. He was a poor farmer; like his wife, Sarla Devi, illiterate. The arrival of the third son brought no dramatic change in their fortunes. Ram Rachpal was the name given to the little one but soon everyone called him Chhotu – and Chhotu Ram he remained for the rest of his life.

The Jats in particular and the agriculturalists in general were at the mercy of the village money-lenders. The dice was loaded against them. Ch. Sukhi Ram was no exception. He was in debt. He could not even provide for the education of his youngest son. Chhotu Ram did well at school, particularly in Sanskrit and English. He wished to go to College and University. But how? Where was the money to come from? His father approached the village bania for advice and help. The answer was that elementary education was quite

sufficient for a Jat boy adding that Chhotu Ram should become a patwari or police head constable.

The young Chhotu Ram had other plans. He borrowed Rs 40 from his uncle Ch. Raja Ram and went to Delhi and joined St. Stephen's College. By this time he had been attracted to the Arya Samaj. In his admission form he put down his religion as "Vedic". Vice Principal Rudra asked him to write "Hinduism" instead of "Vedic". Chhotu Ram was adamant and maintained that the word "Hindu" did not appear in our scriptures and there was no such thing as "Hinduism". He passed his B.A. in 1905 with distinction in Sanskrit.

In his student days he read the Gita. It made a profound impression on him. He later wrote: "In my dogged persistence on the path of what I have considered to be my duty, I have been chiefly sustained by the philosophy expounded on the famous battlefield of Kurukshetra more than 5000 years ago." His interpretation of the Gita was characteristic of him. It was a call to action – not necessarily non-violent action (when India rejected Buddhism and Jainism it rejected non-violence as a creed) that attracted him. "I do not believe in Christ's teaching that you should turn your right cheek also if you are smitten on the left. I believe in the teaching of Moses: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. If you will throw a stone at me, I will hurl a heavier stone at you; please don't squeal when you are hurt. I promise I won't." His credo was clear as a church bell. No ambiguity, no obfuscation. You knew where he stood on basic issues of politics. When he looked around him he saw that those who needed the maximum got the minimum and those who deserved the minimum cornered the maximum. He vowed to put this right and at least in the Punjab he succeeded to a large extent.

Before finally settling down to earn his living as a lawyer Chaudhuri Chhotu Ram did a brief stint as Private Secretary to the Talukdar of Kalakankar, Rampal Singh (grandfather of Shri Dinesh Singh, M.P.). He also sought employment in Bharatpur state, the premier Jat House in the country, but found no suitable opening.

About this time he wrote an essay for the Rev. C.F. Andrews (1870-1940) on "The Improvement of Indian Village Life". He was then only twenty-six years old but he

wrote as an insider. He knew the village from within. His knowledge was not derived, it was acquired first hand. His concern was not academic but real. His commitment was not theoretical but genuine. In this article he covered all aspects of village life and came down heavily on the money-lenders, ignorance, exploitation. the status of women and the joint family, which while having some plus points did breed "drones and loafers". He proposed strengthening the Panchayats and was not unaware of the "almost unbearable monotony" of village life.

After a short stay in Agra he shifted to Rohtak in 1912. A year later he set up joint practice with Chaudhury Lal Chand, another well-known Rohtak figure who was to play a somewhat erratic though not insignificant role in the affairs of the Punjab in the years to come. During the First World War Chaudhuri Chhotu Ram became President of the Rohtak Congress, edited Jat Gazette and drew up a code of conduct for lawyers. This did not endear him to his fellow lawyers but that did not bother him. He liked a clean fight and gave as good as he got. Like Gandhiji he helped to recruit personnel for the army during the 1914-18 war. While he held Gandhiji in highest esteem he broke with the Congress in 1920 as he could not go all the way with the Mahatma's non-cooperation programme and resigned from the Congress. He thus deliberately cut himself off from the mainstream of national political activity and concentrated on the Punjab.

The Punjab's geo-political position gave it a unique place in north Indian affairs. For almost a quarter of a century Chaudhuri Chhotu Ram was among the leading figures in the province. From 1937 to 1945 he was without doubt the most influential, capable and powerful man in Punjab politics.

Along with Mian Sir Fazl-i-Hussain he founded (1923), nurtured, directed and led the Unionist Party. Its record is enviable, even if its life was short.

During his various tenures as Minister for Agriculture, Industry, Education and Revenue, he carried through enlightened and progressive legislation which helped the backward classes and the agriculturists. He allotted lands to the Harijans. He imposed a moderate sales tax on certain items on city merchants. This invited the wrath of business

interests. But he was undeterred. He had a programme to offer, and a will to implement it. He was maligned by the money-bags, called a stooge of the Muslims, and enemy of the city dwellers. Intrigue and envy kept him out of the Assembly for a short while, but he bounced back very soon.

Attempts were made to get him out of the Punjab. Attractive alternatives were suggested – Prime Minister of Kashmir, Dewan of Bharatpur, a seat in the Viceroy's Executive Council. He refused all and when not a Minister he devoted his time and energy to tour the province, revitalise his party and extended his popular base. His name commanded attention and respect not only in the Punjab, but in Rajasthan, Delhi and Western U.P.

After the elections in 1937, the Unionist Party formed the Government in the Punjab. Chaudhuri Sahib was appointed Revenue Minister. He went ahead full steam to fulfil his election campaign promises. The Governor through Sir Sikander Hayat Khan suggested to Chaudhuri Chhotu Ram to go slow. The Revenue Minister replied that the policies of the Punjab Government were not formulated to please either the Governor or the reactionary vested interests and Mahajans. To those who accused him of being pro-Muslim, he said:

> I am a nationalist to the core. Some organisations have, out of selfishness, tried to paint me as a communalist of the worst type; but I wish to tell them that the cloak of communalism does not suit me at all... If Mahatma Gandhi does not become a communalist by having complete faith in Maulana Azad, and Pandit Nehru can remain a nationalist after joining hands with Mr Asaf Ali, then why cannot I remain a true nationalist by joining hands with Sir Sikander Hayat Khan for the good of Punjab.

He often quoted from Jawaharlal Nehru's Presidential address at the Lahore Congress of 1929, particularly the phrase, "economics exhausted nine-tenths of politics". That, he said, was also his credo. "In fact the coercive force of common economic interests will ultimately prove an effective cure for the malady of communalism." So he carried on with his forward-looking, fair-minded programme both inside and outside the legislature winning the everlasting gratitude and

affection of the agricultural communities of the Punjab and the poorer sections of society as a whole. No longer could the Kisans be pushed around, neglected or ignored.

He was a secular patriot who had a sound feel of the pulse of the majority of the people of the Punjab. Thus, he was the only leader of national standing who successfully called the bluff of Mr M.A. Jinnah. This was no mean achievement, particularly after the passing away of Sir Fazl-i-Hussain in 1936. Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, the Unionist Premier, was not cast in the same mould as Sir Fazl-i-Hussain. Chaudhuri Chhotu Ram, therefore, had not only to tackle Jinnah but also to make sure that Sir Sikander did not vacillate. As long as he lived, Mr Jinnah and his Muslim League did not get a foot-hold in the Punjab. Mr Jinnah called Chaudhuri Chhotu Ram's activities "tribal politics". The Unionist Party replied by holding a huge conference to honour Chaudhuri Chhotu Ram and conferring on him the title of Rahbar-i-Azam. When Mahatma Gandhi had talks with Mr Jinnah in Bombay in 1944, Chaudhuri Chhotu Ram wrote to Gandhiji a lengthy letter exposing Mr Jinnah's communal policies and called him "a destroyer not a builder, a demolisher not a constructor, a separatist and not a unionist".

Chaudhuri Sahib was not endowed with a strong constitution and he neglected to take care of his health. Over-work during the war, unending exertion, no holiday or rest for over a quarter of a century took their toll. The first heart attack came in November 1944. Even then he did not reduce the tempo of work and dealt with impending matters, including the finalisation of the Bhakra Dam Scheme, which involved the signing of an agreement with the Raja of Bilaspur in whose territory the dam was to be built. Improvement in his condition gave rise to hope, but soon his condition took a turn for the worse and he died on 8 January 1945 with Sir Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana at his bedside. Within a year the entire political scene in the Punjab changed and Mr Jinnah made his presence felt in the province.

Perhaps Shri Madan Gopal in his commendable biography of Chaudhuri Chhotu Ram, pitches it a bit high when he says: "Had Chaudhuri Chhotu Ram lived for another three years, there could possibly have been no partition of India."

There is little doubt that Chaudhuri Sahib would certainly have ensured a better showing for his party in the March 1946 Assembly elections. He would have given Mr Jinnah a run for his money. He would also perhaps have contained the bloody fury and murders that marred the final months of British rule in India. But it is debatable if he could have prevented the partition of India.

In him the Punjab and the country lost an outstanding administrator (he took pains to learn and master the technique of running a modern government), his party a stout-hearted secular leader, the Assembly a fearless and skilful legislator. The needy and the poor lost a friend. His own community, their beloved guide and Guru.

He often quoted a couplet from the **Hitopadesha:**

परिवर्तिनि संसारे मृतः कोऽवा न जायते।
स जातो येन जातेन याति वेशः समुन्नतिम्॥

It is a fitting epitaph for him.

1978

6. REMEMBERING RAJAJI

ONE OF MY MOST treasured possessions is a book Rajaji gave me. It is his, The Voice of the Uninvolved with an inscription by him which reads, "As a memento of the happy days I spent in your apartments in New York and in grateful memory of your hospitality and help. C. Rajagopalachari, New York. 12.10.1962."

I recall Rajaji's affection and many kindnesses with no ordinary warmth of feeling. He was in his 85th year when I first met him in New York. I am not a modest person, but I can't for the life of me fathom why he took to me, unless he found me a not too unrewarding waster of his time. He was leading the Gandhi Peace Foundation Delegation to press for a total ban on nuclear tests. The other members were Shri B. Shiva Rao and Shri B.R. Diwakar. The combined ages of the three added up to an impressive 223 years. Being young and irreverent I thought: "Fancy sending three stretcher cases to meet President Kennedy." But this was before I was exposed to Rajaji and his phenomenal energy. 188675

He arrived in New York on a cool autumn afternoon in October 1962. Rajaji's political relations with Pandit Nehru at the time were strained but their personal relationship remained unimpaired. The P.M. had instructed the concerned embassies to extend all facilities to Rajaji. Here was yet another typical Nehru gesture proving that private decencies could be practised in the political arena. We were as usual short of foreign exchange, and the delegation was sanctioned limited hard currency. Wherever possible ambassadors were requested to put up Rajaji and his colleagues. In New York, the late Ambassador B.N. Chakravarti, who had been his Secretary when Rajaji was Governor of West Bengal, should have been his host but he had recently taken up his assignment and was living in a hotel. I was asked if I could put up Rajaji in my apartment. This I willingly agreed to do and Rajaji, Shri Diwakar and Rajaji's personal physician, spent nearly a week at 404 East 66th Street.

This was the great man's first ever visit outside India. I was curious to see how this sage of the old world would cope

with the pace and mores of the new world. He arrived wearing a brown woollen achkan and to my great surprise woollen trousers. But the trousers he discarded for a dhoti the next day. He found them too uncomfortable.

Another member of the Embassy had kindly agreed to cook South Indian food for Rajaji in my kitchen. This was the only demand Rajaji made.

I saw much of him at close quarters. What I saw I liked. In one week he demonstrated with effortless ease and grace how the rishis in ancient India must have lived. He never put on an act. His manners were exquisite; his speech gentle and soft, neither patronising nor condescending. He was not given to fog-making generalities or to verbal overkill; language and thought had not undergone a process of dehydration. His conversation was invariably interesting and mercifully free of jargon. Like Pandit Nehru he was always punctual and in matters of personal hygiene, a model of tidiness. The bedroom and bathroom were kept spotlessly clean. His mind was complex but orderly. His intellect sharp, his curiosity child-like, his wit somewhat flinty and unexpected.

Here I am not concerned with his political philosophy (I could never work up any enthusiasm for the latter-day brand which he preached after his break with Nehru, although his vision in which friendship with Pakistan was given a key position was eminently sound) or his career but recall my association with him to show a side of him which is perhaps less known. Except for my stay in China, I have never kept a regular diary but from time to time I jot down interesting incidents and conversations. I kept notes of my talks with Rajaji. Here are a few excerpts.

9th October 1962

Rajaji in relaxed and communicative mood. I implore him to write his autobiography or dictate his reminiscences:

Rajaji: I know we have no sense of history, but does that really matter in the ultimate sense? After all we do not know what Kalidas said to anyone. What he did and what he wrote is important.

Natwar: If everyone took that view there would be no his-

tory. You have played such an active, at times decisive, though controversial role, in recent Indian history, that you owe it to the nation to leave behind your account of what happened. After all Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru wrote autobiographies.

Rajaji: Well, I had no time.

Natwar: Presumably your modesty prevents you from writing.

Rajaji: No. I am not modest that way. I really have had no time. I keep myself busy in so many ways.

Natwar: You must have had plenty of time when you were Governor-General.

Rajaji: (smiling) Yes. I did but all the time was taken up in patching up daily quarrels between the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister. Pt. Nehru wanted me to continue in Delhi. The rest is well-known.

Natwar: In 1953, I was Secretary of the Indian Majlis at Cambridge and invited Lord Pethick Lawrence to address the Majlis. Later I asked him "Which Indian leader impressed you most" and without hesitation he named you.

Rajaji: Did he? I am glad to hear that. He was an excellent man. He wrote to me explaining why he had married again. Cripps was a very impressive man but in the Cabinet Mission he played number two to Pethick Lawrence who used to put him down firmly, "Stafford, let us listen to him, don't interrupt". When did you meet Pethick Lawrence?

Natwar: 1953.

Rajaji: Long after the Cabinet Mission.

The conversation then turned to the partition of India. To provoke him I said, "Lord Mountbatten sold partition to Panditji and Sardar Patel."

Rajaji: Now, let me tell you Natwar-Singh: I sold partition to Mountbatten. The Attlee Government had already made up their mind in that direction but did not know how to put it across in a concrete manner. Mountbatten asked me what he should do to break the impasse. I said partition was the only answer. He first talked to Nehru and then to Patel. They both had seen what was going on and accepted reality.

Natwar: But Gandhiji was against it and he held out till the very end. Why did he suddenly give in? It came as a great shock even to the young like me.

Rajaji: Gandhiji was a very great man but he too saw what was going on. He was a very disillusioned man. When he realised that we all accepted partition he said, "If you all agree I will go along with you", and after that he left Delhi.

At this stage Vincent Sheen (author of Lead Kindly Light, Nehru: The Years in Power) came in for his appointment. Towering over Rajaji he said, "I am so glad Panditji has sent you here. You should have come to Washington in 1950 as ambassador. I told the Prime Minister to send you as ambassador."

Rajaji: I did not know that. In any case I was not well and could not leave India, I did not even stay in Delhi. I am not cut out to be an ambassador.

10th October 1962

Rajaji: You should have come with me to the Columbia University meeting. The boys and girls were very intelligent and asked meaningful questions as to what is Dharma and what is Karma. I told them Dharma was universal duty plus natural order. They said then it was socialism. I said, "Yes, if it was voluntary but not the Indian Government's socialism." It was not a public meeting so I said it. I do not want to do anything to embarrass you or the Government here.

I asked him whether in 1931, at the Karachi Congress, he had been a party to the resolution on linguistic provinces. He was very forthright:

Rajaji: For political and propaganda reasons I was in favour of it in 1931 but when I became the Home Minister I was opposed to it for administrative reasons. In 1931 there was no question of our getting power and politically it made sense. But even then I was not happy about it. Gandhiji did not like my reservations. You see, either we are logical and go all the way or should not give in to pressure. The

problem in India is not socialism or capitalism (these are derivative concepts and un-Indian). It is one of giving the country a strong and efficient Government at the local level. Once having given in in Andhra you can't tell others not to make similar demands. I was opposed to the formation of the States Reorganisation Commission but no one listened to me.

I then asked him about his asthma and how he had got over it. I told him that I too had suffered from asthma but breathing exercises and Yoga had more or less controlled it.

Rajaji: I suffered from acute asthma for many years. During my first imprisonment (1921) in Salem, we used to be locked up from 6 in the evening to 6 in the morning. There was no electricity. The cell was full of mosquitoes, and the humidity aggravated my asthma. All these modern drugs were not available forty years ago and there were times when I felt like committing suicide. With very strict dieting and will-power I finally got over it after long years of suffering. I now keep good health although my hearing is not good.

He made a biting comment on our drug manufacturers, "We should ban manufacture of all medicine in India. We can't be trusted with such things." We also talked about R.K. Narayan and Narayana Menon. He liked them both.

A large number of people including Dr Robert Oppenheimer, Louis Fischer and Norman Cousins called on him. Norman Cousins showed him the first draft of the famous "Pacem In Terris" document which later was released by Pope John. Rajaji made some changes and these were incorporated in the final document. He, of course, saw President Kennedy, U Thant, Adlai Stevenson, Sir Mohd. Zafarullah Khan who was President of the U.N. General Assembly that year. The only time we had an argument was on Goa. Rajaji strongly condemned our action and being India's delegate on the Decolonisation Committee I vigorously defended it. We did not convert each other and he did not hold it against me.

A little sightseeing was also included in New York. He

took the hustle and bustle of that fantastic city in his stride. He kept his own pace. The bulk of the Sunday New York Times bowled him over. The culture of the affluent society did not produce moral indignation. It didn't attract him either. He did no shopping. He probably bought a book or two. Unlike most visitors from India, he did not want to be taken to a duty-free shop, did not borrow dollars to repay them in rupees in India, nor did he have any excess baggage.

When he got to Kennedy Airport on the day of his departure I was with him. He stopped and admonished me for walking too fast. "We should not rush. Shiva Rao is not well." It was touching to see a man of 85 anxious about one 14 years younger.

After he left I thought he would forget me. There was no reason for him to keep track of me or my activities. But I was mistaken. He kept in constant touch with me till the last years of his life. I have a number of his letters, many written in his own hand.

Sometimes he wrote three times in a day. He used words with care and precision. Our love of literature was a common bond. His style was archaic but free of prolixity or pugnacity. He took his literary work most seriously. An adverse comment by an American reviewer regarding his short story "Ardhanari" which I included in my Anthology, Tales from Modern India (Macmillans, N.Y., 1966) bothered him for a long time. But when I sent him a favourable comment from the New York Times he felt better.

When I wrote him of my transfer to Delhi he replied, "Your last letter was very pleasant reading. My best wishes to you. I feel you should settle down and become an American, with fond memories of India, unless the Government of India knows how to utilise your gifts and offer you a good place." The letter was dated April 1st, 1966. A few days later I informed him of my new assignment. He wrote, "I am glad you are with the P.M. [Mrs Indira Gandhi]. I am getting to have a very good opinion of her. I feel like a father or grand father to her."

We Indians are bad correspondents, lapsing into indolence and indifference by middle age. For most life does not begin at forty, it ebbs away at 30. Rajaji was unique. Even in his

92nd year he was writing to me and for my sake read Forster's A Passage to India for the first time.

Oliver Stallybrass was editing a book of tributes on E.M. Forster's 90th birthday (1 January 1969). The book was being brought out by Forster's British and American publishers and Forster's friends all over the world were asked to contribute articles. I was invited to do an essay on, "Forster and India". Among others I wrote to Rajaji to enquire what if any impact the book had made on him when it first appeared in 1924. Pt. Nehru I knew had read the book and quotes Forster twice in his autobiography. Rajaji replied, "To speak the truth I was so absorbed in the non-cooperation programme and controversies of the day that I never read Forster's book. So I can't reply to your question. None of the people mentioned or spoke to me about the book. Kindly send me the book. I shall return it."

Five days later, a postcard arrived saying, "You need not send me E.M. Forster's book. I have found it here. I have not read it or his short stories. I am told they are first class. But I don't think that it had any impact on Gandhian India."

About this time the Italian Edition of Tales from Modern India reached him and he referred to this and an aspect of A Passage to India in his next letter.

> It is interesting to note your collection of stories going round the world. No, Italy showed no interest in me except that good Pope John met me and I felt blessed. He was so kind to me in 1962. So he died soon after!
>
> I finished 89 in December 1967 and I am running 90. About the ICS people – my experience was that the Englishmen were on the whole better than brown people who suffered from an inferiority complex and overdid their arrogance.

He might have added that some of them after 1947 to ingratiate themselves with the Prime Minister even began to write and talk what can best be described as pidgin Nehru. On 20 January 1968 he wrote:

> In spite of my very deteriorated eyesight, owing to lenticular as well as vitreous opacity, because you wrote

about E.M. Forster's Passage to India I read his short stories and his Passage and completed the latter book today.

I have a feeling Forster is one of Dequincy's Tribe, an opium eater genius. This is my fancy or notion based on the extremely subjective manner of his writing. This is the first time I read this eminent writer. Of his short stories I liked two. A Passage to India I ploughed through, though the book has quite a lot of heavy idealised natural descriptions which with this writer is a mannerism. E.M. Forster is a liberal, one of the many British liberals who hold that the mistakes of the British regime were only the arrogance of the officials. In Forster's book the English men and women come off best. The Musulman next best. The Hindu who is really detested – his social customs and his religious practices – all included, comes off worst.

Without the Englishman, India under the Hindus will go to rack and ruin, that was what E.M. Forster, his heroFielding and his Englishmen were sure of. Perhaps it has proved true?

I was surprised that Rajaji had so totally misunderstood the political philosophy of the book and arrived at the conclusions he did. Forster thought quite the contrary and "down with the Empire" was his motto. But that is not important. What was so very striking was his taking time out to read the book and comment on it when he had so many more pressing and important things to do.

Rajaji used to read a number of foreign magazines. In January 1970 ever so gently he took me to task in a front-page article in Swarajya. I reviewed Robert Payne's book on Gandhiji for the Saturday Review of New York and used a phrase which displeased Rajaji. I had written, "Was Mahatma Gandhi a saint among politicians or a politician among saints?" This was not original as words to this effect had been used in some British paper at the time of Gandhiji's assassination. Rajaji's article in Swarajya was devoted to disproving and demolishing this sentence and he wrote a letter to the Saturday Review also and sent me a copy, adding a footnote, "I am sending you this copy of my letter to the Editor, Saturday Review. I congratulate you on your continuing literary efforts."

I last met him in Delhi towards the end of 1967. My wife was also with me and he received us in the apartment of Mrs. Devadas Gandhi above the Hindustan Times building in Connaught Circus. To my wife he said, "Your father [Maharaja of Patiala] played a very helpful and patriotic role in 1947. Please give him my regards" and with tongue in cheek added, "you should join the Swatantra Party and defeat your mother in the next elections," and he seemed to enjoy the joke enormously.

His basic bigness as a man and politician comes out rather well in a letter that he wrote to me on the 24 November 1966:

> I was so glad to read your letter of November 22.
>
> I shall indeed be very glad if you can get me the N.Y.T. review of your anthology. I have not yet received the copy of the book from the publishers. Sea mail takes more time.
>
> I am not surprised you so much like the service under Smt. Indira Gandhi. She is splendidly endowed with all the graces of a good civilized lady. She grew up under the example of her gracious father.
>
> I can never forget the moving gesture of her affection when she came and received my daughter at the Delhi Railway Station [Mrs. Devadas Gandhi] when I took her to Delhi from Bombay after she unexpectedly and cruelly lost her husband. Indira Gandhi whom I did not expect was at the station and led my daughter to the car like a sister. The touch was a consolation both to her and me. This was August 1957, when I had already begun openly and severely to criticise Jawaharlalji.

There is greatness for you — something so lacking in our midst today. People like Gandhiji, Sardar Patel, Rajaji and Jawaharlal Nehru raised the level of our national political dialogue and proved that private decencies could be transmitted to public affairs. Differences they had but on programmes and policies; and these were aired with dignity and restraint, not in mass circulation magazines the following week.

I was in Warsaw when he passed away. I was deeply moved.

He lived longer than most men do and he enriched many lives. He gave so much to India and the world. I prefer remembering to mourning. I shed no tears. Mourning was for those who knew him better, longer; for those closer and dearer to him than I was. I felt sad and empty. A glory had departed.

1978

7. NELSON MANDELA: PRISONER NO. 466/64– ROBBEN ISLAND, SOUTH AFRICA

COURAGE HAS ONLY ONE face — cowardice many. The brave do not cry — no tyranny can break or bend them. On the high road leading to the summit of Mount Courage Nelson Mandela's spear lies very near the peak.

He has spent nearly twenty out of his sixty years in South African prisons. His last fifteen birthdays have come and gone without his being with his near and dear ones. Rarely are his wife Winnie and his daughters and grand daughters allowed to see him. He does not enjoy the privileges of an 'A' class prisoner. He is condemned to hard labour. Under apartheid there is no remission for political "offences". The colossus of South African nationalism could pass the rest of his days behind bars. What has been Mandela's "crime": it is to ask for equal rights for all people regardless of their colour, creed, race or religion.

An aristocrat by birth, a lawyer by profession, a revolutionary by choice, Mandela today remains the supreme symbol of resistance, hope and inspiration in a land where four million frightened and bigoted whites, lord it over twenty two million blacks. This minority hang like a blight over a richly gifted people who are not allowed to live and think in freedom in their own homeland.

Nelson Rolihlahia Mandela was born in the Transkei near Umtata in 1918, the eldest son of a Tembu Chief. His father died when he was twelve. He was brought up by a paramount chief. At sixteen Nelson went to Fort Hare University and being intensely patriotic and sensitive he soon got drawn into student politics and later became one of the leading lights of the African National Congress and founded its militant Youth Congress. He also practised law with Oliver Tambo, the present Head of the African National Congress in exile. By 1952 Mandela had become Deputy National President of African National Congress and led nearly ten thousand people in a non-violent defiance campaign. A natural leader, Mandela with his air of calm command gave new direction

and impetus to the scattered objectives of the African National Congress. He was arrested. He conducted his own defence and was acquitted. Shortly afterwards he was elected Leader of the National Action Council. By now it was clear that even non-violent and peaceful political activity was considered a criminal act in South Africa. In May 1961 he went "underground" and in June an organisation called UMKOMTO WE SIZWE (spear of the nation) was formed to carry on revolutionary activity to bring down the racist regime. During this period Mandela left South Africa surreptitiously and without a passport. He knew that the racist government would not give him permission to leave the country. During his travels abroad he met Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, Haile Selassie, Bourgiba, Leopold Senghor, Bella, Hugh Gaitskell, Joshua Nkomo. On his return he was charged with inciting workers to strike and leaving South Africa without a valid document.

A brilliant lawyer, he demolished the case of the prosecution and he turned the mock trial into a devastating indictment of white domination. The trial was held in Pretoria. One of the witnesses whom Mandela cross-examined on the effects of the Group Areas Act on the Indian community in particular, was an Indian member of the Special Branch, Abdul Moolla. I reproduce the exchange between Mandela and Moolla:

Mandela: You know about the Group Areas Act?

Moolla: I do.

Q.: You know that it is intended to set certain areas for occupation by the various population groups in the country?

A.: Yes, I do know.

Q.: And you know that it has aroused a great deal of feeling and opposition from the Indian community in this country?

A.: Well, not that I know of. I think that most of the Indians are satisfied with it.

Q.: Is this a sincere opinion?

A.: That is my sincere opinion, from people that I have met.

Q.: And are you aware of the attitude of the South African Indian Congress, about the Group Areas?

A.: Yes.

Q.: What is the attitude of the South African Indian Congress?

A.: The South African Indian Congress is against it.
Q.: And the attitude of the Transvaal Indian Congress?
A.: Also.
Q.: They are against it?
A.: Yes.
Q.: And the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress?
A.: Also.
Q.: The Cape Indian Assembly, also against it?
A.: Yes. Well, the Cape Indian Assembly I do not know about.
Q.: Well, you can take it from me that it is against it. Now, of course, if the Group Areas Act is carried out in its present form, it means that a large number of Indian merchants would lose their trading rights in areas which have been declared White Areas?
A.: That is right.
Q.: And a large number of members of the Indian community who are living at the present moment in areas which might or have been declared as White Areas, would have to leave those homes, and have to go to where they are to be stationed?
A.: I think they will be better off than where...
Q.: Answer the question. You know that?
A.: Yes, I know that.
Q.: You say that the Indian merchant class in this country, who are going to lose their business rights, are happy about it?
A.: Well, not all.
Q.: Not all. And you are saying that those members of the Indian community who are going to be driven away from the areas where they are living at present would be happy to do so?
A.: Yes they would be.
Mandela: Well, Mr. Moolla, I want to leave it at that, but just to say that you have lost your soul.

Mandela was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for inciting to strike and two years for leaving South Africa without a valid document. Mandela began to serve his five years' sentence in Pretoria Central Prison and spent 23 out of 24 hours in solitary confinement doing hard labour.

On 11 June 1963 the police raided the underground headquarters of the UMKOMTO WE SIZWE in Rivonia, a suburb of Johannesburg and arrested well-known leaders like Walter Sesilo, Ahmed Kathrada, Dennis Goldberg, Lionel Bernstein and others. Mandela was already in jail. The infamous Rivonia Trial opened in October 1963. Mandela opened the defence case. He made his memorable, soul-stirring statement on 20 April 1964.

His outstanding serenity of spirit, his dignified bearing during trial, his indomitable courage, recall to mind Jawaharlal Nehru's appearances at his trials in the 1930s and 1940s. The title of Nelson Mandela's book, No Easy Walk to Freedom, is taken from an article Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in his collection of essays, Unity of India. Nehru wrote, "There is no easy walk (over) to freedom anywhere and many of us will have to pass through the shadow again and again before we reach the mountain tops of our desires." Mandela quoted this paragraph in one of his speeches.

At the end of the Rivonia Trial Nelson Mandela was given life sentence. He made a four-and-a-half hour declaration, enlarging on the aims of African nationalism and rejecting the false allegations that the African National Congress was a hotbed of communists. His statement made a profound impression throughout the world but it made no impression on the racist regime in South Africa. Two passages will suffice to show the rare stuff Mandela is made of.

> Today I am attracted by the idea of a classless society, an attraction which springs in part from Marxist reading and, in part, from my admiration of the structure and organisation of early African societies in this country. The land, then the main means of production, belonged to the tribe. There were no rich or poor and there was no exploitation.
>
> It is true, as I have already stated, that I have been influenced by Marxist thought. But this is also true of many of the leaders of the new independent States. Such widely different persons as Gandhi, Nehru, Nkrumah, and Nasser all acknowledge this fact. We all accept the need for some form of socialism to enable our people to catch up with

the advanced countries of this world and to overcome their legacy of extreme poverty. But this does not mean we are Marxists.

Concluding he said:

> During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against White domination, and I have fought against Black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

Hemingway defined courage, as grace under pressure. This is it. No easy walk to freedom but La Luta Continua – the struggle continues. Viva Mandela.

1979

8. E.M. FORSTER, NIRAD CHAUDHURI AND MYSELF

TO BE QUOTED BY Mr Nirad Chaudhuri is a rare honour (25 June 1979, The Illustrated Weekly). To be called a friend a privilege. I am grateful. I am deeply touched. But he couldn't resist a dig at Forster. My answer is, "It is better to champion E.M. Forster than becoming a cheer-leader for Rudyard Kipling."

Both, Morgan Forster and Nirad Babu have enriched my life. My affection and admiration for one does not exclude my having similar feelings for the other. Nirad Babu can at times be exasperating, and needs to be gently pulled down a peg or two. That takes some doing, as the 5' 2" Indian Spengler is virtually irrepressible and one is not quite sure when to expect the next eruption. Both Forster and he taught me the value of personal relations and friendship. Also a contempt for ex officio authority. For one brief moment it appeared that I might be a bridge between the sage of Cambridge and the seer of Delhi. But the gods did not will it. Forster and Nirad Chaudhuri did meet but failed to "connect". Thereby hangs a tale. Time has now come to tell it. It is an interesting episode and literary historians might find it of some value.

The Indo-British encounter produced many books. A Passage to India and The Autobiography of An Unknown Indian are among the most admired, brilliant, distinguished, enduring and important. Voltaire said, "The only good books, it seems to me, are those which can be reread without weariness." Each has become a classic in its own genre, and can be read again and again.

Fame and fortune smiled on Forster early. From the start the dice was loaded against Nirad Chaudhuri. Up to the publication of the Autobiography in 1951, he existed as an obscure, impecunious scholar. He was poor, but he was free. His flinty integrity tolerated no compromises. Character triumphed over the tyranny of circumstances. "Moral discipline was an indispensable preliminary to spiritual achievement," he wrote in his autobiography which brought fame

but little finance. Fame, as always, opened doors closed before. The unknown Indian was becoming known.

In June 1954, Nirad Babu made a frontal attack on A Passage to India in a learned article in Encounter. I was at Cambridge then and showed it to Forster. He made amusing marginal comments. That some of the criticism went home, I discovered later. On my return to India I wrote a short piece on Forster in The Illustrated Weekly. Nirad Babu read it and when we ran into each other at a dinner at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, he referred to it.

Thereafter we met several times. At first he tolerated me. That he liked me I realised only when on my copy of one of his books he wrote — " 'The conversation of the old and young ends generally with contempt or pity on either side,' said the great Dr Johnson, but I do not agree for I have enjoyed Natwar's conversation, and I hope Natwar, too, even though of less than half of my age, has enjoyed mine." Conceited though I am, that bowled me over.

In our conversations, to avoid rows, Forster was seldom mentioned. I was, therefore, not a little surprised when Nirad Babu on being invited by the British Council and the B.B.C. to visit England in the summer of 1955, asked me if Forster would see him. I wrote to Forster. A prompt but typically Forsterian reply made it clear that he had not forgotten the Encounter article. He wrote, "Now I get your line about Mr Chaudhuri. I had a letter from the British Council earlier; they suggested our meeting and I replied to them that if he cared to write to me direct, I should hope to fix something. It's upto him to write, I think, after the way he snubbed my poor Aziz." They met at Cambridge. Forster was then nearing the height of his world-wide fame, his books were selling in millions, while Chaudhuri was just beginning to see the end of the tunnel. As far as Forster was concerned the encounter was pleasant. He wrote to me: "I liked Mr Chaudhuri — thought him so first hand and it was remarkable how much — and how genuinely he was enjoying English 18th century homes, and the pictures of Domenico Veneziano." Not surprisingly when Nirad Babu's A Passage to England appeared in 1959, Forster reviewed it for the London Observer. (Nirad Babu told me he would have liked Churchill to review it!)

Forster's review was generous without being patronising, subtle but not severe. He wrote:

> Besides having integrity and courage, he possesses enthusiasm, cheerfulness and a good English style.... I had the pleasure of meeting him once during his visit. His liveliness and intelligence were striking and he made two remarks that particularly impressed me. The first remark was about an unfamiliar Florentine Painter, Domenico Venezíano. He seemed to know all about Domenico Veneziano and I realised how thorough his cultural preparation for Europe must have been and how much he must have read and reflected.

Forster continued, "The second remark was about my novel, 'A Passage to India'. He announced with some firmness that Aziz would never have been admitted into his ancestral home. This does not matter for Aziz, who after all has elsewhere to go, but it made me wonder whether I should have been admitted either...." He concluded, "It is a pleasant book and pleasantest when least dogmatic...."

Forster's review obviously helped, for commercially A Passage to England did well. But N.C.C. continues his relentless and futile crusade against a man who helped Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Ahmed Ali in their literary careers and who spoke up for Jayaprakash Narayan in 1946 (when J.P. was in jail) and who denounced Chinese actions on our borders in 1962. There is no evidence in Kipling's life to indicate that he would have acted thus. There is however evidence that he was present in March 1902 at the graveside, in Salisbury, of that arch imperialist, Cecil Rhodes and read out a specially written poem; the last verse of which is:

> There, till the vision he foresaw
> Splendid and whole arise.
> And unimagined Empires draw
> To council' neath his skies,
> The immense and brooding spirit still
> Shall quicken and control.
> Living he was the land, and dead,
> His soul shall be her soul.

Africans to this day are paying with their sweat and blood for the creed and deed of Rhodes. That is why it is better to be a champion of Forster than becoming a cheer-leader for Kipling.

1979

9. ONLY CONNECT...FORSTER AND INDIA

AS I WRITE THIS essay affectionate recollections of Mr Forster come rushing to my mind. I do not wish to drive them away, even though they might make a dispassionate appraisal difficult. Just as he found it impossible to resist India, his friends find it impossible to resist him. I have had the good fortune of calling Mr Forster a friend for fifteen years; it is largely to him that I owe such awakening as has befallen me. I have said elsewhere that a part of myself, such as I am today, has been moulded and permanently influenced by him. I do not know if that would do him any credit, but without him my life would have been infinitely poorer. His writings and his personal example have made some of his readers aware, if not capable, of higher things. He cured us of some of our baser ambitions and instincts: if, to adapt a familiar saying, we can't beat them we don't want to join them either. The result is that his "aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky" (TC, 82) gets short shrift in the rough and tumble of everyday life. Yet it never gives up, never gives in. Its members are to be found in three generations of Indians who have had the pleasure of calling Morgan Forster a friend.

This economical intimacy and rapport, spreading over most of the twentieth century, with a people so different from his own has been achieved through affection, loyalty, a warm heart, and sensitive understanding. He has spoken with a voice unlike anybody else's. The Indore preacher conveys much of our love for Forster when he tells him during the Gokul Ashtami Festival: "We have not met an Englishman like you previously." (H D, III.)

A meeting of minds may not have always been achieved, but the hearts did meet. The radiance of his triple vision – as friend, critic, creative artist – has helped a few of us in "the building of the rainbow bridge that should connect the prose in us with the passion" so that we might "connect without bitterness until all men are brothers" (H E, 196, 284). That is the essence of A Passage to India, the reason why it endures.

It is still read, not because it found answers "to the tragic problem of India's political future" (T C, 334), but because it promotes the creed that without love you cannot "connect". The "undeveloped hearts" (A H, 13), which ruled India failed to "connect": their work and labours ended in "panic and emptiness".

In contemporary India Forster is not widely known, and judgement has been passed on him almost wholly on the basis of A Passage to India. The Hill of Devi evoked an India that was not popular in the 1950s; in a letter to me in 1954 Forster wrote: "Yes, I am afraid the book will be as uncongenial to the new India as A Passage was to the old Anglo-India. The outlook of both the books is much the same. I think it is the political situation that has altered." The later book was misunderstood as an apology for the Princely Order. No one remembered that as long ago as 1922, in his remarkable essay, "The Mind of the Indian Native State", Forster had said: "An alliance between the British and the Princes against the rest of India could only lead to universal disaster, yet there are people on both sides who are foolish enough to want it." (A H, 378.)

But there is a hard core of admirers who are aware of the deep and powerful influence he had on the moral outlook of his age, and to them he came as a blessed relief after Kipling.

Having mentioned Kipling's name, I must pause and say something about him in relation to Forster. For the first quarter of the twentieth century the English-speaking world, perhaps including Forster, looked at India largely through the eyes of Rudyard Kipling. In his tribute to Ross Masood, Forster says – "Until I met him, India was a vague jumble of rajas, sahibs, babus and elephants, and I was not interested in such a jumble: who could be?" (T C, 299.) Well, a great many Englishmen were, for that is precisely the India which Kipling very nearly succeeded in immortalising. All that tosh about the white man's burden and the stiff upper lip which made the sahibs at Poona and Cheltenham feel so pukka only widened the gulf between India and Britain. Forster, to some extent, provided the corrective, but the damage had been done.

Sensitive Indians found Kipling's jingoism offensive and

offending, and many would agree with Orwell's comment that he was "morally insensitive and aesthetically disgusting".[1] Orwell's correction of "white man's burden" to "black man's burden"[2] is also very much to the point; for, unlike Forster, Kipling had no understanding of the economics of imperialism or for that matter any kind of economics. It was beyond him to realise or learn that the British Raj, like all other empires, was an exploitation machine. He would have been completely baffled by Martin Luther King's comment that "the peculiar genius of imperialism was found in its capacity to delude so much of the world into the belief that it was civilising primitive cultures even though it was grossly exploiting them."[3]

Forster and his like would neither build nor sustain empires; they have not the dedicated zeal, nor the self-righteous, public-school sense of responsibility upon which empires rest, as do their graves.

Forster has been to India three times. His first visit was in 1912-13, in the company of Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson and R.C. Trevelyan. It was during this trip that he met, through Sir Malcolm Darling – a non-establishment Civil Servant and an exception to the generally unattractive set of men who ruled India – the Maharaja of Dewas Senior, Bapu Sahib, who "was certainly a genius and possibly a saint" (H D 49). During this visit Forster travelled fairly extensively and made many friends. In spite of the bomb-throwing incident at Delhi, in which the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, was slightly injured (H D, 18-19), the India of 1912 was politically very dull and inactive; and the Indian National Congress, in the words of Jawaharlal Nehru – who had just returned to India after seven years at Harrow, Cambridge, and London – "was very much an English-knowing upper-class affair where morning coats and well-pressed trousers were greatly in evidence. Essentially it was a social gathering with no politi-

1. "Rudyard Kipling", *My Country Right or Left, Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters*, Vol. 2; London, Secker & Warburg, and New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1968, p. 184.

2. *Ibid.*, P. 193.

3. *The Legacy of Nehru*, ed. K. Natwar Singh, New York, John Day, 1965, p. 67. I am indebted to the publisher for permission to quote.

cal excitement or tension."[4] Gandhi was still in South Africa and relatively unknown.

The second visit was from April to November 1921. He spent most of his time at Dewas, where he was private secretary to the Maharaja. It was during this trip that Forster saw "so much of the side of life that is hidden from most English people" (H D, 25).

Forster's last visit to India was in 1945, when he came to attend the Indian PEN Conference. His two great friends, Masood and Bapu Sahib, had died in 1937. He travelled to Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, and Hyderabad. Finally, he visited Santiniketan, "the home and the creation of Tagore.... I spent a night there, and understood why it has exercised a mystic influence on many of its sons. You will either know a great deal about Santiniketan or else you will never have heard of it. It is that kind of place. Its name means 'The Home of Peace'." (T C, 334.) Tagore, of course, was dead and so was Iqbal and "their disappearance has impoverished the scene." (P. 333.) Forster had met them both and has written about them in Abinger Harvest and Two Cheers for Democracy. Of this last visit he says:

> The big change I noticed was the increased interest in politics. You cannot understand the modern Indians unless you realise that politics occupy them passionately and constantly, that artistic problems, and even social problems – yes and even economic problems – are subsidiary. Their attitude is "first we must find the correct political solution and then we can deal with other matters." I think the attitude is unsound, and used to say so; still, there it is, and they hold it much more vehemently than they did a quarter of a century ago. When I spoke about the necessity of form in literature and the importance of the individual vision, their attention wandered, although they listened politely. Literature, in their view, should expound or inspire a political creed. (T C, 327-28.)

4. *An Autobiography*, London, Bodley Head, 1936, p. 27. I am grateful to Mrs. Indira Gandhi for permission to quote this and other passages from her father's book.

In pre-1947 India "Art for Art's Sake" was not a popular creed, and understandably so. First the battle for independence had to be won, then the problems of literature could be attended to.

"And did I do any good?" Forster asks himself. "Yes, I did. I wanted to be with Indians, and was, and that is a very little step in the right direction." (P. 335.)

Mr Forster is perhaps the only Englishman, certainly the only English writer, to have inspired half a dozen Indian writers to present a book of tributes to him.

In March 1963 Santha Rama Rau and Raja Rao were in my apartment in Manhattan. Santha's dramatisation of A Passage to India was still being talked about. Raja Rao's second novel in twenty-five years, The Serpent and the Rope, had received attention in serious literary circles in America. Forster's name naturally came up. Raja Rao said I should postpone my "study" of Forster and edit instead an Indian tribute to him as an offering on his eighty-fifth birthday. He added that nobody had done more for his writing than Forster. Both his first novel Kanthapura and The Serpent and the Rope were published with Forster's help, and became successes in their own right. So a decision was taken to get on with the project. Forster gave his affectionate blessing and by permitting inclusion of selections from his Indian writings—among them his virtually unknown but deeply moving and perceptive tribute to Gandhi[5]—made publication possible.

The book, when it appeared, attracted attention in unexpected quarters. American admirers of Forster and critics responded warmly and it provided them an occasion to join in the Tribute. It also provided an opportunity for a reappraisal of Forster's work, its relevance and importance to present-day problems. The Wall Street Journal, as befits a sound financial paper, posed the most pertinent question:

> Few men of the West, none of them statesman, or in what C.P. Snow calls the corridors of power, can have had as much praise and of such kind from the East....What was

5. *E.M. Forster: A Tribute*, ed. K. Natwar-Singh, New York, 1964, Harcourt Brace, pp. 79-81.

this accomplishment that won such feelings for an Englishman writing as a novelist about India; a circumstance that could have, and often has, engendered hostility?

The accomplishment is indeed of a very high order, possibly unique. On the one hand it has been resolutely private and on the other it has had wider, even universal, overtones. India has been a major but by no means an exclusive influence on Forster, even though he calls his stay in Dewas "the great opportunity of my life" (HD, 10).

A Passage to India describes the "human predicament". It also describes an India that has altered very considerably since 1924, but despite subsequent works on India by Westerners, it remains the outstanding example of an Englishman's honest effort to understand and interpret this country and its complex people.

My theme, Forster and India, debars me from discussing the artistic and other excellences of A Passage to India, and I shall confine myself to its politics, which remained relevant for a very long time. The Indian situation changed, but comparable situations sprang up in other parts of the British Empire, and the same mistakes were made. The insolence of British administrators, the behaviour of their wives, the thoughtless imposition of unworkable federations, continued till only the other day.

What impact, if any, did it make in England forty-five years ago? What impact did it make in India? Forster has himself provided an answer to the first question. In 1962 I asked him what were the Indian and British reactions to A Passage to India when it appeared in 1924.

E.M.F.: For a long time no one took any notice. Then a paper called the Morning Post reviewed it favourably. After a year or two it started—the reactions to the book, I mean. I also received a few abusive letters from Indians.

Q: What is your own assessment of the political influence it had on the "Indian question"of the time? Do you think its political influence was accidental and exaggerated?
E.M.F.: It had some political influence—it caused people to

> think of the link between India and Britain and to doubt if that link was altogether of a healthy nature. The influence (political) was not intended; I was interested in the story and the characters. But I welcomed it.[6]

There is no doubt that thoughtful, honest, liberal-minded Englishmen and intellectuals both in the Government and outside began to look at the Indian situation from a different point of view.

The literary intelligentsia were shocked and deeply disturbed. Forster made the British Raj stick in their throats, and it was not a comfortable or comforting sensation to live with. Looking beyond and beneath the brilliance of the writing, they began to ask: "What are we up to in India?" As a novelist it was not Forster's responsibility to find political solutions. Morally there could be no justification for one race ruling over another. The problem was posed and an indictment made: the British Raj might win a few battles, but it was losing the war. The English and the Indians could not be friends as long as the Raj lasted. That Indo-British relations took the turn they did during Mountbatten's time is a vindication of what Aziz says to Fielding at the end of the book. Hope was not abandoned; it was only postponed.

Forster was the first English writer to portray Indians as human beings and not merely as caricatures or doubtful and shifty natives. But he is no Indophile. There are indignant and highly critical portions in Passage and in Devi. He noticed and commented on our inattention to detail, our idleness and incompetence. The Hindu's preoccupation with intrigue and suspicion did not go unnoticed. "Intelligent though they are over intrigues, Indians too can get confused and identify hopes with facts. One is reduced—as are they—to siding with the people one likes...." (HD, 66.) He was helpless in the presence of the widespread Hindu habit of referring to almost all religious and metaphysical matters by a periphrasis.

We took it from him (even Godbole's highbrow incoherence) for two reasons. First, because he was harder on his own people, whose reaction, indeed, proved that "nothing

6. *Ibid.*, pp. xii-xiii.

enrages Anglo-India more than the lantern of reason if it is exhibited for one moment after its extinction is decreed." (PI, 173.) Second, because he seems to have taken to heart the words of Tagore: "Come inside India, accept all her good and evil: if there be deformity then try and cure it from within, but see it with your own eyes, understand it, think over it, turn your face towards it, become one with it."[7]

Forster's portrayal of Anglo-India has been disapprovingly commented upon. It has been labelled as exaggerated and uncharitable. But this view does not stand up to close scrutiny. The men who "ruled India" did behave badly, did snub Indians, while their women "knew none of the politer forms (of Urdu) and of the verbs only the imperative mood". (PI. 45.) They constantly outraged Indian sentiments. Even after independence sections of the British community in certain cities ran their own clubs on racial lines. Such behaviour was not likely to endear them to a free India any more than that of their fathers had endeared them to Forster.

Does Forster do injustice to the British Civil Servants in India? Is he unfair to them? Let us call Nehru as witness:

> They lived in a narrow, circumscribed world of their own—Anglo-India—which was neither England nor India. They had no appreciation of the forces at work in contemporary society. In spite of their amusing assumption of being the trustees and guardians of the Indian masses, they knew little about them and even less about the new aggressive bourgeoisie. They judged Indians from the sycophants and office-seekers who surrounded them and dismissed others as agitators and knaves. Their knowledge of post-war changes all over the world, and especially in the economic sphere, was of the slightest, and they were too much in the ruts to adjust themselves to changing conditions. They did not realise that the order they represented was out of date under modern conditions, and that they were approaching as a group more and more the

7. These words from Rabindranath Tagore's novel, *Gora*, London, Macmillan, 1924, pp. 102-3, are quoted on the title-page of Sir Malcolm Darling's *Rusticus Loquitur*, London, Oxford University Press, 1930.

type which T.S. Eliot describes in "The Hollow Men".[8]

Forster would have been spared a great deal of criticism if more people in India had read Rose Macaulay's comment: "Some confusion is perhaps caused by the book's doubtful chronology, for it deals with the India of one period, is written largely from material collected and from a point of view derived from that period, and was published twelve years later, when Indians and English had got into quite another stage."[9] The "doubtful chronology" of the book did indeed create confusion. It depicts a pre-1914 India and by the time it was published in 1924 events had overtaken it. It appears to be an almost anti-nationalist book, since it makes no mention of the political ferment that was going on in India in the early twenties.

The First World War had changed everything. The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms had not fully met Indian aspirations, Gandhi had launched his non-cooperation movement, Tagore had renounced his knighthood after General Dyer had killed 379 peaceful Indians in cold blood in Jallianwallah Bagh. After this, Gandhi, who till then had tolerated the British Raj, became its most outspoken opponent. The book therefore, failed to impress the Indian nationalists, who consisted largely of middle-class intellectuals. It made little or no impact in India. The issues had gone beyond good manners. It succeeded in annoying the British without satisfying Indian political aspirations. Gandhi did not read it, and the highly intelligent and erudite C. Rajagopalachari, the man who succeeded Mountbatten as the first and last Indian Governor-General, did not do so till quite recently. Nehru did, and refers to it in his Autobiography.

It seems odd that a person of Forster's awareness could have been so totally oblivious of what was going on in India in 1921. It is typical of him not to have explained, or to have tried to explain it away. We had to wait for The Hill of Devi to solve the mystery, and even that only on a very close

8. Nehru, *op.cit.*, p. 443.

9. *The Writings of E.M. Forster*, London, Hogarth Press, 1938, p. 188.

reading.

In a recent article in Encounter Andrew Shonfield says that "Forster had little understanding and no sympathy for the complicated and courageous politics of the Indian independence movement."[10] Forster's political antennae were a little more acute and active than Mr. Shonfield imagines. Writing about the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1921, Forster in places sounds amazingly like Nehru—although this was the year which saw Nehru in prison for the first time.

> About the Prince of Wales's visit I might also write much. It is disliked and dreaded by nearly everyone. The chief exceptions are the motor-firms and caterers, who will make fortunes, and the non-cooperators and extremists, who will have an opportunity for protest which they would otherwise have lacked.... The National Congress meets in December at Ahmedabad, and it will certainly carry through its resolution in favour of Civil Disobedience, and if there is general response, this expensive royal expedition will look rather foolish. I have been with pro-Govt and pro-English Indians all this time, so cannot realise the feeling of the other party; and am only sure of this—that we are paying for the insolence of Englishmen and Englishwomen out here in the past. I don't mean that good manners can avert a political upheaval. But they can minimise it, and come nearer to averting it in the East than elsewhere....But it's too late, Indians don't long for social intercourse with Englishmen any longer. They have made a life of their own. (HD, 154-55.)

Nehru says much the same thing in his Autobiography which The Hill of Devi preceded by nearly fifteen years.

> G. Lowes Dickinson is reported by E.M. Forster, in his recent life of him, to have once said about India: "And why can't the races meet? Simply because the Indians bore the English. That is the simple adamantine fact." It is possible that most Englishmen feel that way and it is not surprising. To quote Forster again (from another book),

10. *Encounter*, XXX, Jan. 1968, p. 68.

every Englishman in India feels and behaves, and rightly, as if he was a member of an army of occupation, and it is quite impossible for natural and unrestrained relations between the two races to grow under these circumstances. The Englishman and the Indian are always posing to each other and naturally they feel uncomfortable in each other's company. Each bores the other and is glad to get away from him to breathe freely and move naturally again.

Usually the Englishman meets the same set of Indians, those connected with the official world, and he seldom reaches really interesting people, and if he reached them he would not easily draw them out. The British regime in India has pushed up into prominence, even socially, the official class, both British and Indian, and this class is most singularly dull and narrow-minded. Even a bright young Englishman on coming out to India will soon relapse into a kind of intellectual and cultural torpor and will get cut off from all live ideas and movements. After a day in office, dealing with the ever-rotating and never-ending files, he will have some exercise and then go to his club to mix with his kind, drink whisky and read Punch and the illustrated weeklies from England. He hardly reads books and if he does he will probably go back to an old favourite. And for this gradual deterioration of mind he will blame India, curse the climate, and generally anathematise the tribe of agitators who add to his troubles, not realising that the cause of intellectual and cultural decay lies in the hide-bound bureaucratic and despotic system of government which flourishes in India and of which he is a tiny part.[11]

Forster always warmed to talk about Jawaharlal Nehru. He met Nehru twice and recalled these meetings with feeling. Nehru's style, his secularism, his internationalism, his quiet but open agnosticism, all appealed to Forster and he was, even when not wholly approving of the turn the Indian National Movement was taking, horrified that men like Gandhi and Nehru should be denied the freedom to say their say. Forster once said to me: "Nehru is the most upright and level-headed statesman in the world. Politicians are generally

11. Nehru, *op.cit.*, pp. 28-29.

busy tidying up their past. Your Prime Minister is an exception." In 1964, a few weeks after Nehru's death, I gave Forster a copy of Nehru's last will and testament. Forster was visibly moved and said how saddened he was at Nehru's passing away. He told an American friend of mine that he "would have voted for Nehru with both hands."[12]

Forster has also been taken to task for choosing a Moslem as the main character in his novel. This hasn't worried the Indians too much. Even after partition sixty million co-religionists of Aziz live in India. Islam is their religion, India their home. That Aziz had been taken as the Moslem and Godbole as the Hindu is unfortunate. It is wrong and dangerous to talk in such confined terms. Just as there is no such thing as the real India, there is no single individual representing an entire community. Forster as a novelist and creative artist was free to choose anyone for his hero. His choice does not make him pro-Moslem or anti-Hindu. The community of the person was unimportant for describing and high-lighting the human predicament, and for describing human relationships.

Forster himself told me: "I think of them—of Aziz and Godbole—as people and not as religious types." And I am content to leave it at that. Forster has many Moslem friends, and a larger number of Hindu friends. It is a matter of chance and not of calculation.

The Hill of Devi finally nails the lie that Forster does not know his Hindu well. Even given Forster's insight into human character, his gift for finding the right words for the right occasions, his talent for uncovering layer after layer of the human personality, his sturdy moral realism, his aesthetic sense and his sense of the unseen, no one who had not made a study of Hindu philosophy and thought could have written such a book. Raja Rao calls it "one of the most Indian books of this century".[13] Whether he writes about Hindus or Moslems, he penetrates their hearts and the result is dazzling. The sheer authenticity of the dialogue in both books is

12. In July 1964 I visited Forster, accompanied by an American friend, Jane Goldstone (now Mrs Ralph Feaver). She kept a record of the meeting and I quote this with her permission.

13. *E.M. Forster: A Tribute*, p. 28.

staggering. His description of the Gokul Ashtami festival is flawless. Forster caught the spirit of the festival and found meaning and significance in Hindu ritual which have eluded or escaped other English writers.

He also took the trouble to study the Bhagavad-Gita. Without such a study, his description of Gokul Ashtami would have been superficial. A Hindu festival made him aware of a gap in Christianity: "the canonical gospels do not record that Christ laughed or played. Can a man be perfect if he never laughs or plays? Krishna's jokes may be vapid, but they bridge a gap." (HD, 119.)

Forster had obviously read the Bhagavad-Gita either before or during his first visit in 1912. His essay "Hymn before Action" deserves to be better known. It analyses the central core of the Gita. Krishna asks Arjuna to fight and destroy his enemies even though they be his close relatives. Arjuna must fight because it is his duty and that duty has not been assigned to him by chance. Krishna convinces Arjuna, who drives into battle rejoicing, and wins a great victory. "But it is necessarily and rightly followed by disillusionment and remorse. The fall of his enemies leads to his own, for the fortunes of men are all bound up together, and it is impossible to inflict damage without receiving it." (AH, 382.)

Forster has acknowledged his debt to India and Indians. It is time we acknowledged our debt to him. Even at the best of times Forster has been aware of the excesses of nationalism and for a long time his attitude to Indian nationalism was cautiously sympathetic, not noisy and erratic like Bertrand Russell's. In spite of hating "causes", he has consistently, quietly, and candidly stood up for India. When many of the professional and loud-mouthed British friends of India looked the other way, he came out strongly in support of India at the time of the Chinese aggression in 1962.

> We can urge on our Government and the Governments of the West to supply arms on lend lease, and to increase the aid they give for India's Plans, now that India's own resources have so largely to be devoted to war. Above all, we must try to give additional heart and courage to our Indian friends whose spirit in the crisis is sound and steadfast. On

> the survival and success of India depends the hope for a better life of one-fifth of the human race. We cannot let the Chinese aggressors destroy this hope.[14]

During the Second World War, as President of the National Council for Civil Liberties, he took up the cudgels on behalf of Jaya Prakash Narayan, who was being tortured in Lahore jail. He was appalled that his countrymen should treat brave patriots like Jaya Prakash Narayan in this brutal manner.

Since personal relationships are at the centre of Forster's creed, it is appropriate to end on a personal note. Without his support and backing the careers of some of India's leading writers would not have been possible. I have already mentioned Raja Rao and Santha Rama Rau. Mulk Raj Anand told me that in 1935 Forster saved him from suicide by adding a preface to his first novel Untouchable, which had been rejected by seventeen publishers. His generous intervention in 1940 for Ahmed Ali's novel Twilight in Delhi, his discriminating observations about R.K. Narayan, G.V. Desani, and Narayan Menon illustrate his belief that the Indian talent is no less significant than any other, given the chance. His has been truly "the face of a friend" (AH, 337) and what he said of Gandhi is in no small measure applicable to himself:

> He is with all the men and women who have sought something in life that is neither chaos nor mechanism, who have not confused happiness with possessiveness, or victory with success, and who have believed in love.[15]

1969

Introduction to "Tales from Modern India" ed. K. Natwar-Singh, New York, Macmillans.

AH : Abinger Harvest
HD : Hill of Devi
HE : Howard's End
PI : A Passage to India
TC : Two Cheers for Democracy

14. Letter by E.M. Forster and others in *The Spectator*, CCIX, 30 November 1962, p. 856.

15. *E.M. Forster: A Tribute*, p. 81.

10. INDIAN LITERATURE—A BRIEF SURVEY*

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF this anthology is to give American readers an idea of the richness and variety of Indian literature. The twenty stories included here will, I hope, provide some insight into the workings of the Indian literary genius and the forces and influences that have given it life and sustenance.

The short story has flourished in India. The reasons are many—among them the influence of the great Western short story writers of the nineteenth century and the comparative ease with which short prose pieces in English and Indian languages could be published and distributed. Few Indian writers of importance have neglected this genre: a number of them can be said to have become masters of it. Perhaps in no other branch of creative or literary activity has the feel of the Indian scene been so ably, or so rewardingly, captured.

These stories, I trust, will offer the reader a contemporary expression of Indian literature and life, both rural and urban and in the different regions of India. Almost all the important writers of the past hundred years are represented, and the settings of the stories range from peasant existence (which even today contains echoes of India's remotest past) to the sophisticated and cosmopolitan milieu inhabited by some of India's new but alienated bourgeoisie.

The themes of the stories vary widely—depending in part of the section of India from which the author comes. The ways of handling these themes show striking divergences. Some of the writers exalt traditional virtues, others concentrate on the problem of the human predicament in an ancient country trying to come to terms with the twentieth century. American readers will be reminded here that American writers are often beset with the problems arising out of affluence, while Indians and Indian writers face the problems of poverty. In both countries, the creative artist has a challenging and difficult—but somewhat different—role to play. As

*Appeared in *Tales from Modern India*, New York, Macmillan, 1966

James T. Farrell has written, "America developed a realistic literature at a time when the Republic was so secure that criticism and exposure, even in pitilessly sadistic novels, did not weaken the foundations of the nation. It is different in the new countries of Asia. These countries are struggling to become nations....How critical should Indian writers be? Can they write with the fearless realism and desire for truth of a Zola, or some of the twentieth century American novelists? If they do, will they not be weakening their own countries?"* These stories may provide an answer to some of Mr Farrell's legitimate questions.

They are different in style, sensibility, social awareness, in artistic and creative achievement and elan, but their deep humanism gives them a unity of spirit that is uniquely Indian. Nine were written originally in English. They are by Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Khushwant Singh, and Santha Rama Rau. The rest were originally in Bengali (Tagore and Sarat Chandra), Tamil (C. Rajagopalachari), Hindi (Prem Chand), Urdu (Krishan Chandar), Malayalam (T.S. Pillai), Marathi (Bhave), and Telugu (Padmaraju). Taken as a whole these stories constitute a formidable example of the Indian tradition and prove that the Indian writer, whether his medium is Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Malayalam, or English, works within that tradition. More often than not he does so unconsciously.

In India as elsewhere in Asia the short story is a literary phenomenon of recent origin, the latter half of the nineteenth century. Its development in its present form is largely the result of the impact of Western thought and ideas. Like the civilization of India itself, Indian literature reflects a diversity of races, cultures and religions, yet within this diversity exists a unified harmony that retains its own very special imprint. It is important to remember that Indian literature is multilingual.

Any adequate comparison with Western literature can be made only by comparing Europe as a whole—a conglomeration of races and communities sharing, to varying degrees, the traditions of a common Indo-Aryan civilization. The Constitution of India recognizes fourteen national languages: ten

*James T. Farrell in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, Bombay, 9 December 1956.

Indo-Aryan languages consisting of Sanskrit, with its nine progeny, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Urdu; and the four Dravidian languages of Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu.

The place of English is quite distinct. For all practical purposes it remains the lingua franca of the educated classes throughout the country. Next to their mother tongue, educated Indians (25 per cent of the entire population) feel more at home in English than in any other language, Indian or foreign. Mr Krishna Kripalani describes our linguistic gymnastics thus: "It is not an uncommon thing to find in an Indian home the parents conversing with each other in one tongue, talking to their children in another, addressing the servants in a third, and entertaining guests and visitors in yet another and perhaps more than one tongue."

The literary and intellectual importance of a language cannot necessarily be measured by the number of individuals using it, but the relative strength of numbers has meaning. Hindi, thus, may be deemed the leading language of India, for it is spoken throughout northern India, by a population of nearly 200 million. The term "Hindi" is used loosely to denote a group of Indo-Aryan dialects which over a period of about five centuries evolved distinct literary forms of their own. Today's Hindi has behind it a vast and varied heritage, embracing as it does the Braj Bhasha, Bhojpuri, Magadhi, and Maithili dialects. The famous poet-saint Kabir (1440-1518) wrote in Bhojpuri although he used Perso-Arabic words which greatly influenced and vitalized Hindi. The predominant position of Hindi has been recognized in the Constitution of India, which confers on it, without prejudice to the remaining thirteen languages scheduled therein, the status of the official language of the Indian Union. Although what is known as Hindi has behind it this varied heritage, in its present standard literary form it is of comparatively recent origin—not earlier than the first decade of the nineteenth century. It was only with the arrival of the writer Prem Chand on the Indian literary horizon, in the early years of the twentieth century, that short stories and novels in Hindi caught the imagination of Indian readers and intelligentsia.

Urdu is in a class by itself. Linguistically, it is Indo-Aryan,

born in India and developed like Hindi in the Indo-Gangetic plain. Having affiliated itself with the Persian which was the official court language in India for 250 years after the Mughal invasion—it evolved an individuality all its own. Today it is the chief language of some 50 million people of northern India. It is also the official language of the western part of Pakistan. Two of the writers included in this anthology, Prem Chand (1880-1936) and Krishan Chandar (1913-1976), have written some of their best works in Urdu, although in his later years Prem Chand switched to Hindi. A large number of people who know one of these two languages are also well versed in the other, and the intermediate zone where the two meet has been called the zone of the Hindustani-speaking people. Hindustani was the language that Mahatma Gandhi cherished and hoped would one day become the lingua franca of the Indian community as a whole, although Gujarati was his mother tongue. Hindustani was the *language that Jawaharlal Nehru used in public for all his* countless speeches throughout the length and breadth of the country. 188075

The relative numbers of people speaking other major languages in India were given in the 1961* census: Assamese 6.8 million; Bengali 38 million; Gujarati 18.1 million; Kannada 17.9 million; Kashmiri 1.9 million; Punjabi 9.7 million; Malayalam 17 million; Tamil 30 million; Telugu 33 million; and Marathi 30 million. The population of India has gone up by almost 100 million since 1961. It would, therefore, be safe to assume that figures mentioned above can be increased by 25 per cent in almost all cases.

To have a proper appreciation of this complex pattern one has to bear in mind the multilingual character of Indian literature. Few Westerners have tried to understand the literary activity that transformed the Indian languages into great and vital vehicles of thought and artistic creation, entitling at least some of them to recognition among the literatures of the modern world. But underlying this diversity was a unity that drew its strength from the conception of India as a nation and its identity with a common Sanskrit culture and

*A 20% increase was noted in the 1981 census.

civilization.

Traditional Indian literature, whether in the Indo-Aryan or in the Dravidian languages, was mainly devotional and religious on the one hand, and philosophical and mythological on the other. There were important exceptions, the most significant, the plays of Kalidasa and the folk tales and stories like the Panchatantra; but for over a thousand years literature was subservient to religious fervor, and was dependent on oral delivery for its propagation. The Epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—were the source from which Indian literature drew most of its material and were, for the most part, passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. Even Muslim writers writing in Persian and Urdu were influenced by this devotional aspect, as is clear from the work of Kabir.

A major characteristic of traditional Indian literature has always been its didactic tone. Excessive emphasis was laid on moral values—asceticism, renunciation, celibacy, sacrifice, and suffering were recommended and respected. This peculiarity in Indian writings still continues today. Its best known exponent is C. Rajagopalachari, who has recently popularized the Mahabharata and the Ramayana by writing them in simple style for mass audiences.

Indian literature was not truly secularized until the first part of the nineteenth century, when English ideas gained currency. To some extent, however, the multiple character of Indian literature had always existed, and from time to time it received injections from outside. Even in the heyday of early and classical Sanskrit (1000 B.C. to A.D. 500), which, like medieval Latin, was the language of intellectuals and on whose foundation the unity of India rested for a thousand years, there existed side by side a body of nonconformist literature in other languages such as Pali and Tamil.

As Mr Krishna Kripalani, the biographer of Tagore, has said, "Indian literature is one of the oldest and one of the youngest literatures of the world. Its ancient record in the Rig Veda (1500 B.C.) is admittedly the earliest monument of Indo-European speech." Jawaharlal Nehru has written: "The Rig Veda, the first of the Vedas, is probably the earliest book that humanity possesses.... Yet behind the Rig Veda itself lay

ages of civilized existence and thought, during which the Indus Valley and the Mesopotamian and other civilizations had grown. It is appropriate, therefore, that there should be this dedication in the Rig Veda: 'To the Seers, our Ancestors, the First finders!' "

During its history of over three thousand years, Indian literature has had its high and low points. There have been periods when the creative genius of the Indian mind has given to the world works of great beauty and subtlety, like the plays of Kalidasa, the philosophical writings of Sankara, the poems of Kabir, Tulsidas, and Nanak (1469-1539). On the other hand, there have been periods—the late eighteenth century, for instance—when political chaos combined with intellectual lethargy made it impossible either for the creative arts to flourish or for literature to be appreciated. The English language arrived on the Indian scene at such a time.

From at least the beginning of the Christian era, Indian literature has had two major vehicles: Sanskrit with its many Indo-Aryan offshoots, and the Dravidian languages of South India. It was, however, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that modern Indo-Aryan languages had their richest literary flowering. The source of inspiration was twofold: a revival of interest in the Sanskrit heritage, particularly as embodied in the great epics; and the upsurge of Vaishnavism, a sect of Hinduism, a widespread cult of devotion to a personal god identified with Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, and with Krishna, the hero of the Mahabharata and the Bhagwat Purana. While the early literature in the Indo-Aryan languages of northern India, was almost entirely in verse, the Dravidian or South Indian languages had some prose writing. The common features of both groups of languages were the classics and the translations and free renderings of the Epics. The most famous of these is Tulsidas' Ram Charitamanas (fifteenth century) and Kamban's Ramayana (ninth century), which appeared in various popular tongues.

Along with adaptations of the Epics, there was a considerable output of devotional songs and verse by the poet-saints who flourished during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: Sankaradev in Assamese, Chandidas in Bengali, Vidyapati in Maithili, Narasima Mehta in Gujarati, Meera Bai in Rajasthani,

Kabir in a mixed form of Bhojpuri and Urdu, Surdas in Braj Bhasha, Ekanath in Marathi, and Guru Nanak in Punjabi. The works of these men warmed the bloodstream of Indian literature down through the centuries.

The arrival of Islam in India (eighth century A.D.) affected the Indian literary scene considerably. Apart from the fact that the development of the Urdu language and literature stemmed from this, several modern Indian languages were enriched by Muslim writers themselves. Through them were transmitted traditions from Arabic and Iranian literatures. Having made India their home, the Muslim writers turned to purely Indian themes for inspiration, for example the heroic tale of the Rajput Queen Padmini of Chittor which inspired Malik Mohammed Jayasi's Padmavat, an allegorical narrative in Awadhi written in the sixteenth century. To this may be added the general impact of Muslim thought, particularly in its nonconformist Sufi tradition. This influence is particularly evident in the Kashmiri and Punjabi languages.

India has known many dark ages in her long history, but the latter half of the eighteenth century was an especially dismal period politically and culturally. With the death in 1707 of Aurangzeb, the last of the great Mughals, India experienced administrative chaos, political uncertainty, intellectual apathy, and a general cultural decay. Indian literature became impoverished and ingrown. Only toward the end of the eighteenth century, when the British had become masters of eastern India, did the pattern of literary mores alter. English thus came to India at a time when doors to a progressive and enlightened existence seemed permanently sealed.

The general picture of Indian literature on the eve of the arrival of the British was confused and complex. Its two main sources had been Dravidian and Indo-Aryan religious and literary traditions as embodied in Sanskrit texts and the teachings of Buddha, and the traditional, all-prevailing folklore. Whether the writers were Aryans, Hindus, Buddhists, Dravidians, or Muslims, religious impulse in poetry and prose was ever present. Indian religious literature, insofar as it was not lyrical, philosophical, argumentative, or philological, consisted mainly of manuals of ritual for daily life or for particular occasions—marriages, births, deaths, pilgrimages,

vows, and so on.

The foundation of the educational policy of the British government in India was laid down by Macaulay, who had nothing but contempt for Asian literature and once stated, rather recklessly, that he was prepared to sacrifice the entire literature of the East for a single shelf of English books. For him "the object of British policy should be to promote European literature and science amongst the natives."

It is interesting to note, however, that the demand for Western education had come in the first instance from enlightened Indians themselves. In 1823, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, one of the greatest literary figures of the early nineteenth century, wrote to Lord Amherst, Governor-General of India, protesting the establishment of the Government Sanskrit College in Calcutta. He asked that Western education of a liberal and enlightened kind be made available to Indians. Thus in the early years of British rule in India, the English language was voluntarily and enthusiastically learned by young men in Bengal, and later on by the Indian intelligentsia throughout the country. The political situation in the country was such that while we were denouncing the English in almost every field of life and thought, we were eagerly and enthusiastically learning their language. The service that English rendered to India, particularly in the fields of political science, medicine, and engineering, cannot be minimized. Politically, it developed and strengthened our consciousness of national unity more effectively and dynamically than had ever happened before in Indian history. Although it remained a language of the educated classes, it shook the Indian intelligentsia out of its mental stupor and involvement with the past. It made the revolutionary literature of Europe and America available and these works profoundly influenced the Indian national movement. In addition, it introduced scientific learning and research. Thousands of Indians were able to acquire new techniques and information in these fields.

The English language linked the thinkers and political leaders of the entire Indian subcontinent and this laid the foundation for administrative and political unity. The debt that modern Indian literature owes to English is very great indeed. It would be churlish to minimize it.

The development of modern Indian literature is marked by certain characteristics which it shares with modern literatures in other parts of the world, and by others that relate to the special circumstances of India. One of the latter is a certain dichotomy in the mental attitude of the writer. An intellectual tug-of-war still rages between traditionalism and progressivism. This conflict between orthodox and unorthodox is not unique to India, but there the clash of loyalties is remarkable for its vehemence.

Western thought, represented by an alien government and culture, and with its emphasis on democracy and freedom, stimulated a patriotic and nationalistic reaction which in turn instigated a search for roots. From the beginning of the twentieth century Indian literature was increasingly coloured by political aspirations which were passionately voiced in the songs and poems of Tagore, the Tamil poet Bharati, the Bengali poet Kazi Nasrul Islam, and the Urdu poet Iqbal. The writings of Tilak, Gandhi, and Aurobindo also illustrate a dilemma which Indian intellectuals continue to face today.

Jawaharlal Nehru was perhaps the best example of this split; in his own words, he was himself "a peculiar mixture of the East and West." While the intellectual centre of the Indian writer, particularly if he writes in the English language, is in London, New York, Paris, or Moscow, his spiritual roots must be in India. His attraction toward the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the British ideas of parliamentary democracy and justice, and the Russian Revolution of 1917 is undisputed, and this influences both his mental outlook and his literary output.

At the same time, ancient India has its own indissoluble enchantment and he cannot divorce himself from the teachings of the Bhagavat Gita or the spiritual insights of the Upanishads. Politically India is a new nation, but as a civilization it is very ancient. The problem of the modern Indian writer is to be Indian first, and at the same time to be modern.

Indian literature was and continues to be influenced by Western writers. To the names of Tolstoy and Gorki, Victor Hugo and Romain Rolland, Dickens and Thackeray are added Pasternak, Sartre, Hardy, even Kipling, and T.S.

Eliot and Hemingway. At the same time the reciprocal influence of Indian thought and literature on European and American writers has not been insignificant. A scientific study of Indian literature was begun around 1760 by Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of Bengal. He knew Sanskrit and Persian, and in a preface to Charles Wilkins' translation of the Gita, he wrote that such works "will survive when the British domination in India shall have long ceased to exist, and when the sources which had once yielded all wealth and power are lost to remembrance."

Kalidasa's Sakuntala was translated by William Jones in 1789. A German translation appeared in 1823, and Goethe's enthusiastic reception of the book is well known. Schopenhauer too was considerably influenced by the teachings of the Upanishads and of the Buddha, and German transcendentalism was in general affected by Indian thought. In England, Edwin Arnold's Light of Asia was hailed, as it was in America, where Thoreau, Emerson, Mark Twain, and Walt Whitman all expressed their interest in Indian thought. Thoreau wrote that "the pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of Ganges"; and the title of Mr E.M. Forster's famous novel A Passage to India is taken from a poem of Whitman. Other Western writers who were considerably influenced by Indian thought include W.B. Yeats, Romain Rolland, Hermann Hesse, Somerset Maugham, T.S. Eliot, Rudyard Kipling, and Aldous Huxley.

Kipling's influence over his generation's view of India cannot be exaggerated. The outside world looked at India through Kipling's eyes for at least a quarter of a century. Yet, his acquaintance with India was slender and limited to a small segment of the Anglo-Indian establishment. Apart from the Jungle Books, he wrote about officials and military officers and their lives in British cantonments. He was a reactionary in politics, and his jingoism was resented by Indians. That he was a great story-teller has never been questioned, but his Indian characters were generally drawn in the flat. Only after E.M. Forster's A Passage to India appeared were Western readers of fiction given a sympathetic and rounded image of Indians.

The greatest impact on modern Indian thought and litera-

ture was made by three men — Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Karl Marx (1818-1883), and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). In the strict meaning of the word, none of these was a man of letters proper.

Marx and Freud introduced the "scientific" spirit, and in the words of Krishna Kripalani, gave "a much-needed jolt to the smugness of the traditional attitude with its ageold tendency to sentimental piety and a glorification of the past."

Each of them unleashed intellectual and political passions which shook Indian intellectuals and men of letters to the very foundations of their polity. Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Prem Chand, Krishan Chandar, T.S. Pillai, Santha Rama Rau, Khushwant Singh were all influenced by these three modern thinkers—each to a greater or lesser extent. Indian life was exposed to new ideas concerning behaviour interpretations from which there could be no turning away. Marx and Freud greatly affected modern Western thought, and it was inevitable that Indians too should feel this impact. But in India the image and personality of Mahatma Gandhi counterbalanced this foreign influence to some extent.

Gandhi's Western mentors were Thoreau, Tolstoy, and Ruskin. He was also much impressed by Carlyle's On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History. The Gita and the Bible were, of course, closest to his heart, and another book that impressed him for reasons that are less understandable was Washington Irving's Mahomet and His Successors. After spending twenty-one years in South Africa he returned to India in 1914 and provided a powerful ethical stimulus to the literary trend, which had already begun to turn from romanticism toward realism. Gandhi's insistence on non-violence and on the simplicity and purity of personal life touched a responsive chord in the inherent idealism of Indian thought and thus served as an indirect inspiration to creative writing. His own simple and direct style, devoid of all rhetoric, was a healthy corrective to the natural tendency to flamboyance of many Indian writers. Gandhi left his imprint on Hindi and Gujarati literature particularly.

Prem Chand, for instance, influenced by Tolstoy and Gorki, came under Mahatma Gandhi's spell. Prem Chand resigned a minor government job to devote himself to writing

about the life of the Indian peasant upon whose uplift Gandhi focused much of his life. His writings attacked caste, Hindu society's treatment of widows, and the custom of child marriage (he himself married a widow against the considerable opposition of the times). He knew rural India intimately and his books give a faithful and moving account of the plight of the Indian peasant, a man subject to foreign government on the one hand, and on the other at the mercy of money-lenders. Prem Chand did not have Tagore's vision nor his sensibility, and when he ventured away from peasant life into other fields and settings, he tended to oversentimentalize and his characters did not always ring true.

Raja Rao's first novel, Kanthapura, was also inspired by Gandhi's teachings of non-violence. R.K. Narayan wrote a novel in 1956 entitled Waiting for the Mahatma, and Mulk Raj Anand's first novel, The Untouchable, bears the unmistakable hand of Gandhi.

Marx's influence was widespread in the early 1930s, not only among young Indian politicians but among Indian writers. Mulk Raj Anand, Krishan Chandar, especially, introduced the theme of class conflict into Indian literature for the first time. Krishan Chandar felt that he "has a mission as a short story writer to show the capitalist and the ruling classes in all their brutality and bestiality." To some extent this influence continues in Indian fiction to this day, but it is not so strong a force as it was a generation ago. Political developments in India and abroad since World War II have naturally been responsible for this change.

It is difficult to pinpoint Freud's influence on Indian writers. It exists, obviously, and to an extent it has liberated Indian writing from unscientific superstitions. After the arrival of Islam, sexual inhibitions paralyzed Indian writing. Before that the Hindu attitude to sex had been healthier, perhaps, as illustrated by the classical Kamasutra by Vatsyayan in the third century A.D. and the plays of Kalidas. Sex had been discussed with frankness and naturalness. However, Islam combined with Victorian morality, and with the narrow Brahmo doctrines reinforced by the asceticism of Mahatma Gandhi, made sex in the first part of the twentieth century a closed subject for literature—except as Gandhi

wrote of it in his autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth.

Because of Freud, a younger generation of writers and intellectuals could write about sex with more fre. dom. Thus in the 1950s there was little surprise when Khushwant Singh and Padmaraju wrote their tales of passion and love, "The Rape" and "*On the Boat.*"

Jawaharlal Nehru has a unique place in the world of letters. In his case, it has been said, the gain to politics was a loss to literature. At least two of his books, his Autobiography and The Discovery of India, belong permanently to the literature of the English language. He wrote elegantly and sensitively. Nehru was for some time president of the Indian PEN Club and enjoyed meeting and talking to writers. He gave them whatever encouragement he could.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) of Bengal was the first modern writer to give distinct character to the Indian short story, and he was to a large extent responsible for the artistic rediscovery of India by Indians. He absorbed the Western spirit and naturalized it into Indian literature. Tagore was a bilingual writer with the vision to see that if modern Indian literature was to be a living force, it would have to keep pace with the modern age. He infused vitality and flexibility into the Bengali language itself, and introduced an international outlook into Bengali literature in particular and Indian literature in general.

Tagore was well versed in Western literature. The liberal humanism of English writers and poets appealed to him. He particularly read Goethe, Shelley, Keats, W.H. Hudson, Robert Browning, and was a friend and admirer of W.B. Yeats. He neither repudiated the past nor made a fetish of the new. He drew from the Indian classics and folk traditions of his own land, from the Upanishads, from the teachings of Buddha, from Kalidasa. Tagore used, adopted, and absorbed European forms and techniques and applied them with great success.

Tagore's main significance lies in the impulse and direction he gave to the course of India's cultural and moral development, and in the example he presented of a genius passionately devoted to his art and no less passionately dedi-

cated to the service of his people and humanity in general. He gave the Indian people faith in their own languages and in their cultural and intellectual heritage, despite the value and influence of English.

The contemporary renaissance of Indian languages is in no small measure indebted to him. Tagore's was a many-sided personality—poet, patriot, playwright, philosopher, painter, composer, educator, universalist, and novelist. His influence on at least two generations of Indian writers was extraordinary and all-pervasive. The novel, the short story, the drama, the essay, literary criticism all have been influenced by him particularly in the various North Indian languages. He was undoubtedly the most vital force in India's modern culture, although his direct inspiration has faded over the past few years. A Tagore revival has taken place recently, both in India and abroad—stimulated by the centenary of his birth which was celebrated in 1961—but it would be true to say that today he is more admired than actually read.

In writing of the Indian literary scene as he saw it in 1945, E.M. Forster sketched the following observations in his collection of essays, Two Cheers for Democracy: "Book production: very active, though the authors are miserably paid. Short stories are popular; I read some excellent ones on Bengal. Poetry often echoes T.S. Eliot or Auden. Drama is not prominent. Criticism weak. Indians have a marked capacity for worship or for denunciation, but not much critical sense, as criticism is understood in the West." The situation has changed for the better in the past two decades, but Mr. Forster's comments are partly true even today.

The complex nature of Indian literature naturally multiplies difficulties for the Indian writer, and English continues to be used as a link language and as a matter of social convenience. It is the language that the President of India, Mr Venkata V. Giri, and the Prime Minister of India, Mrs Indira Gandhi, used to converse with each other.

For those writing in the Indian languages, the barriers of language create major obstacles. This is a problem not unknown elsewhere. For instance, how many Norwegian or Rumanian authors can hope to have their work translated into the more widely used languages? And unless such Euro-

pean writers are translated, their reputations and incomes will remain strictly local and limited. In India, however, unless an author's work is translated into several of its fourteen languages, it can be read only by a small number of his own countrymen.

We must also face the fact that the world is not going to learn Hindi or Tamil, and that our ability to use the English language as an artistic and creative medium should be welcomed rather than disparaged for narrow political reasons. In that respect some of the writers of Africa have faced this problem with a candour which is not always present in India. Mr Achebe, the Nigerian author, says of English, "I have been given this language, and I intend to use it." Mr Leopold Senghor, when asked, "Why do you Africans choose to write in French?" replied, "We did not choose it, French chose us." It is often argued by critics of the use of English by Indian writers, that "it is not akin to the genius of India." The answer to this rather shallow approach is that neither are parliamentary democracy, nor the five year plans, nor the protection of individual human rights, which are all an essential and accepted part of Indian polity today.

Perhaps Raja Rao expressed the Indian writer's intention best when he wrote in 1938,

> One has to convey in a language that is not one's own, the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and emotions of a certain thought, movement that looks maltreated....We cannot write like the English, we should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as a part of us. Our method of expression has to be a dialect...distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American—time alone will justify it.

Robin White, an American novelist who spent many years in India, says in a thoughtful article in the Reporter of 14 February 1963, "Hopeless as the Indian writer's task might seem, the challenge has been met with some success, mainly because the writers themselves tend to be as diverse as the nation."

It is acknowledged that while English and Western litera-

ture have acted as catalytic agents, the fundamental inspiration, particularly in the vernaculars, still comes from the Epics and Sanskrit. It is true that there is no branch of English literature activity in which Indian writers have not claimed consideration—especially Tagore, Radhakrishnan, Nehru, Sri Aurobindo, Nirad C. Chaudhuri (The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian), Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, B. Rajan (The Dark Dancer, Too Long in the West), G.V. Desani (All About Mr Hatter), Santha Rama Rau, Kamala Markandaya, to mention only a few with international reputations and audiences. Yet the lesser known writers display a tendency to consciously master a foreign language and to indulge in what Kripalani calls "a self-conscious elegance, an undue emphasis on semantic chastity and a tendency to overwrite." Fluency and intensity are not enough; precision and clarity are equally important.

Indian writers face the anomaly that while Indian literature is a unity, writers and readers of a single language hardly know anything being written in a neighbouring language. It is necessary to devise further ways and means whereby Indian writers can meet across the barriers of written and spoken languages, and enable their readers to appreciate the immense variety of their own country's literary heritage.

The difficulties of the Indian writer are inseparable from his economic plight. The Indian writer has to work even harder than his Western or Japanese counterpart. His creative work is done under less congenial conditions. Publishing as a trade is just beginning to become respectable or profitable. During the year 1965-66, 20,185 titles were published. This for a population of 500 million is tragically small. English topped the list with 10,347 titles, followed by 2,376 in Hindi 1,612 in Marathi, 1,422 in Bengali, and 947 in Tamil. Big cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, and Madras, and most of the universities, numbering about seventy-five, have adequate libraries. However, book buying and selling in India do not occupy the prominent place they do in Europe, America or Japan. One reason is that any book costing more than Rs.10 (roughly $1.25) is beyond the reach of over 90 per cent of the educated people.

The situation is being remedied by an impressive paper-

back explosion, which is making books available to the lower income groups in much larger numbers at low cost. On the other hand in spite of recent improvements in royalty payments and fees paid by newspapers, magazines, the radio, and TV, writers on the whole cannot live by their craft alone. Those drawn to writing as a profession need to have other sources of income. Tagore, Khushwant Singh, Santha Rama Rau, and to a lesser extent Raja Rao, T.S. Pillai and R.K. Narayan either had private means or were supported by their families till their books began selling. The joint family system is now facing growing pressures and strains, and its disappearance, though far off as yet, is no longer a fanciful illusion. Authors of text books are in a different category and mint money, even when what they produce is of inferior quality.

A vast majority of Indian writers have to struggle to make ends meet. Prem Chand, who died in poverty, is a striking example. In 1920, he was paid Rs.5 for a short story, and this was typical for the time. Even today, royalties paid to Indian writers are a pittance in comparison with those of other parts of the world. Rs.150 ($21.00) is considered a handsome payment for a short story or a magazine article. A best-seller is as yet unknown in India, nor are there guilds or book clubs to bolster sales.

Efforts are now being made to correct this state of affairs. A major step was taken in 1954, when the Sahitya Akademi was inaugurated. Its first president was Jawaharlal Nehru himself, and the second was the then Vice-President of India, S. Radhakrishnan. In his inaugural address, Dr. Radhakrishnan defined the objectives of the Akademi as follows:

> 'Sahitya' is Sanskrit and 'Akademi' is Greek. This name suggests our universal outlook and aspiration. Sahitya is literary composition; academy is an assembly of men who are interested in the subject. So Sahitya Akademi will be an assembly of all those who are interested in creative and critical literature. It is the purpose of this Akademi to recognize men of achievement in letters, to encourage men of promise in letters, to educate public taste and to improve standards of literature and literary criticism.

In 1957 the National Book Trust was set up to encourage the writing of high-quality books on non-fictional subjects and to make these books available at modest prices to libraries, colleges, and students. In 1958 a group of young writers led by P. Lal, the well-known poet and translator, started the Writers Workshop in Calcutta. The Workshop publishes a highly readable bi-monthly, The Miscellany, devoted to creative writing. The Workshop "consists of a group of writers who agree in principle that English has provided its ability, as a language to play a creative role in Indian literature—through original writing and transcreation."

The future of any literature is, of course, in the hands of its writers. India's literature is no exception, despite the difficulties under which its writers labour. The main creative problem that the Indian writer of fiction faces is to perfect his use of the novel form. Whether in Hindi, Marathi, or English the Indian novel is often static, its characters types rather than individuals.

B. Rajan put it well when he wrote in The Illustrated Weekly of India on 26 March 1963,

> Both the novel of manners and the novel of the East-West collision tend to be concerned with relatively restricted areas and are not concerned with them at any significant depth. The novel of Indian life is aggressively Indian and the local colour seems to all but obliterate the traditional resources of fiction and the ability to use them. The novel of ideas is not always distinguished by intellectual power. The novel of meanings is not merely surrounded but almost stifled by its philosophic envelope....These admissions have to be made, but the truth is that they also have to be made of Indian literature in languages other than English.

Tagore, Prem Chand, Raja Rao, and R.K. Narayan have a sense of form, but a great many others do not seem to possess the standards of literary architecture which are expected of serious writers in the West and Japan.

A similar deficiency exists in the field of critical and descriptive literature. Indian drama too is, as Forster pointed out twenty years ago, weak and provincial, not organic and living. All in all, it is safe to say that the great full-length

works of Indian literature, aside from the classics and the holy books, have yet to be written.

But what the Indian has lost to the novel he has won for the short story, where he has successfully handled the interlay of situation and character (see Krishan Chandar's story "Kalu Bhangi"), and there is no reason why, given time, he cannot achieve the same results with the novel. After all, America had to wait almost a hundred years after its independence for the arrival of Melville and Mark Twain.

Indian literature today is full of vitality and promise. The literary scene has been watered by many rivers, indigenous and foreign. It draws sustenance and strength from the Vedas, the Puranas, the Epics, the Panchatantra, the Jataka Stories, Banabhatta, from Sankaracharya and Kabir, Nanak and Tulsidas, from Kamban and Amir Khusro, from Bharati and Bankim Chandra Chatterji, from Tagore and Sarat Chandra. It has received a rich legacy from Western literature in general and English literature in particular—and whatever the fate of English language in India, this legacy will continue to enrich modern Indian literature.

The dilemma of the Indian writer continues to haunt him. B. Rajan wrote in 1965:

> The question to be answered is whether the Indian tradition with its capacity for assimilation and its unique power of synthesis can come to terms with the new (and the new is inevitable) without deep erosions in its fundamental character. In creating an image of this challenge there is perhaps a part to be played by the man of mixed sensibility caught between crossfires, whose mind is a microcosm of what he seeks to convey.

This is a noble challenge. Only time can tell whether Indian literature can meet it fully, but it is the editor's belief that this volume offers firm evidence that it can.

1966

11. MULK RAJ ANAND

TAGORE WON THE NOBEL prize for literature in 1913. His was the only name known to the West till Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable appeared in 1935. Its publication was made possible by E.M. Forster who in his generous preface wrote,

> Untouchable could only have been written by an Indian, and by an Indian who observed from the outside.... Mr. Anand stands in the ideal position. He has just the right mixture of insight and detachment, and the fact that he has come to fiction through philosophy has given him depth.

During the war George Orwell and Mulk Raj Anand were colleagues in the BBC. About that time, Mulk Raj Anand's sixth novel, The Sword and the Sickle was published. Orwell reviewed it for Horizon. Writing of the future of the English language in India, he pronounced,

> It might survive in dialect form, as the mother tongue of the small Eurasian community, but it is difficult to believe that it has a literary future. Mr. Anand and Mr. Ahmed Ali (Twilight in Delhi) are much better writers than the average run of English novelists but they are not likely to have many successors.

Mercifully time proved Orwell wrong. The English language flourishes in India and Indian writers and novelists like Nirad Chaudhuri, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, G.V. Desani, Khushwant Singh, Santha Rama Rau, Dom Moraes, Kamala Markandaya, and B. Rajan have enriched English literature.

Mulk Raj Anand became one of India's most prolific and famous writers in English. When at the end of war he found the sources of his creative inspiration drying up, he turned from fiction to other branches of literature and to the arts. He founded and continues to edit the best art magazine in Asia—Marg.

We thank him for pioneering literary work—for striking a

few blows for literature, the arts, for gaiety and humanism. We need more of his kind.

1978

12. PREM CHAND – A LIFE

THREE NAMES DOMINATED THE Indian literary scene in the twenties and early thirties – Rabindranath Tagore, Mohd. Iqbal and Munshi Prem Chand. While Tagore was a revered world figure, Iqbal a national personality, fate was less kind to Munshi Prem Chand. The greatest Hindi writer lived a life of near destitution and died at the early age of 56. Born after Tagore and Iqbal, he pre-deceased them. An unusual sequence.

By the time I was 16, I had read almost all of Prem Chand's novels and short stories. Nearly 20 years ago I read Amrit Rai's book on a round the world trip. Prem Chand: Kalam Ka Sipahi was a biography of exceptional merit – full-blooded, gripping, critically sympathetic, profoundly serious, deeply moving. It was something more than biography. It captured the temper of the times, bringing to light the hidden reserves of the Indian people on which Gandhiji had drawn.

Now we have H.K. Trivedi's masterly translation of Kalam Ka Sipahi. He has come to Prem Chand via E.M. Forster and Virginia Woolf. Obviously, he is equally at home in Hindi and English. His translation is technically accomplished and discriminating. The result is a more orderly and skilfully organised work, also a shorter one. Trivedi's version, while basically faithful to the original, is tighter, with no loose ends left suspended in mid-air – a defect from which even Godan suffers.

Prem Chand's centenary in 1980 should have provided a good occasion for a serious reappraisal of his work and his place in Indian and world literature. The fact that there was some doubt on this score is made clear by Professor Lothar Lutze – in his essay "Prem Chand: Literary Theory and Practice". This was published in Prem Chand: An Anthology edited by Dr. Nagendra. Dr. Lutze teaches modern Indian languages at Heidelberg. The coming centenary received a battering from him. "The centenary spectacle is on again. It is Prem Chand's turn this time. The patterns are known only too well. People who haven't read a single line of his in the

original are discussing his merits and demerits as a writer; others who write in English are, or pretended to be, concerned with his relation to the masses for whom they themselves, as long as they write in English in India, refuse to write; the maulvis and the pandits are once again unearthing the old bone of contention in the name of Urdu and Hindi, which according to Prem Chand himself, are just 'two names of one thing' or, linguistically speaking, two shapes ('swarup') of one language. . .All this has happened before and to others, with the result that many a centenary celebration ended in the celebrity's being shelved as a 'classic', which is the literary variety of a first class funeral. Prem Chand's survival this year (1980) will depend on an honest assessment of his work as the product of a man's endurance of enormous tensions – cultural, social, environmental, political, linguistic – and his critics' willingness to judge him not by his extra-literary intentions but by his literary achievement." Harsh words but from an admiring quarter.

Reckless Investor

The Amrit Rai-Trivedi books throw much light on the life and work of Prem Chand. Prem Chand was reckless with material things. He destroyed all letters (Pasternak did the same), left no drafts or notes. He kept an indifferent diary. He spent much of his time and energy in ventures which were financially unsound. What he earned from his writings, he invested in starting unsuccessful journals and buying printing presses. In this he was incorrigible and was to a large extent responsible for his own penury. He was chronically bankrupt and chronically ill. A lesser man would have succumbed much earlier under this double-barrelled onslaught. Not so Prem Chand.

Posted to remote, unhealthy and dreary places, paid a pittance, separated from his near and dear ones, maligned for plagiarism, poised between despair and destitution, he kept pouring out his heart and soul in his short stories, novels and essays. He defied custom by marrying a widow, followed custom by marrying a widow, followed custom and did not educate his daughter, challenged authority and succumbed to

it but not for long. When Gandhi appeared on the Indian scene, Prem Chand gave up the security of a government job and used his pen in the service of the freedom movement. He did not believe in art for art's sake. That was a luxury no Indian writer of the time could afford. No wonder he did not take kindly to Bengali literature which he considered effeminate.

Prem Chand's views on Indian society, his description of rural India, are of the utmost importance as are his views on a national language. They make very great sense even today. He was no narrow-minded, sectarian bigot. He had no hesitation in acknowledging his debt to western literature and thought, but his roots were Indian. The economics of communism appealed to him and he saw the Soviet Union as a "major social experiment".

This translation brings out even more pointedly than the original, Prem Chand's abiding compassion, and rectitude, his flaming integrity and humility. This is not to suggest that he did not know his worth as a literary genius; he possessed an unoffending vanity and a natural dignity which enabled him to face the world without compromise. He was the least pompous amongst the famous. In this volume will be found many extreme instances of this disarming but slightly exaggerated humility. Some immortalised by Jainendraji. Also of interest will be Prem Chand's unsuccessful flirtation with the Bombay cinema world. He loathed every minute of it and returned as soon as his contract was over. On May 14, 1935, he wrote to Jainendra from Bombay: "So what was my haul from Bombay? .... I have returned richer by the sum of Rs. 1,400 and a lot wiser."

A Living Language

Trivedi's translation succeeds well in putting across Prem Chand's robust, sane, and secular views on a national language. Let me quote Prem Chand's stirring words:

"A living language, like a living body, keeps constantly changing. 'Pure Hindi' is a nonsensical term. If India were purely Hindu, its language would have been pure Hindi. So

long as we have here Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Afghans and all the other races, our language too will have to be broad-based. Hindi can be made a pure language but only if it wants to remain a provincial language and the language of the Hindus. We must now take it to pieces and recompose and metamorphose it. It is ridiculous, and inconceivable, that it will revert now to childhood from full-grown adulthood .... Aligarh today is the centre of Urdu language and Muslim culture. From my discussions there with the professors of Urdu and Persian and of other subjects, I know that they are quite as averse to the maulvi Urdu as they are to the pandit Hindi ....

"I have spent my whole life in the service of Urdu and even today I write more Urdu than I write Hindi. Moreover, being a kayastha by caste and having learnt Persian in childhood, I find Urdu comes to me more naturally than does Hindi."

He continued: "I ask you, why do you feel so murderously towards Hindi? Do you know – and if not, then you very well ought to know – that the first poet in Hindi, who sowed the seed of literary Hindi .... was (a Muslim) Amir Khusro? Do you know that upwards of five hundred Muslim poets have so far enriched Hindi with their works and that some of them rank among the top poets in the language? Do you know that Akbar and Jahangir and even Aurangzeb had a taste for Hindi poetry and that it was Aurangzeb who had given to new varieties of mangoes (pure Sanskrit) names such as Rasana-vilas and Sudha-ras? Do you know that even today poets such as Hasrat and Hafeez Jalendhari occasionally try their poetic prowess in Hindi? Do you know that thousands of nouns and verbs in Hindi have originally come from Arabic and Persian and are now completely at home in it? And if you know all this and still discriminate between Urdu and Hindi, then you do an injustice to your country and to yourselves ... I have a complaint against my Muslim friends, that they shun even the most easily understood Hindi words."

Never healthy or strong, Prem Chand fell fatally ill on June 16, 1936. One day shortly before his death, he said, "I feel quite depressed these days. If I could somehow get hold of Pickwick Papers, that might cheer me up." He got the book.

He passed away on October 10, 1936.

The final moments of Prem Chand's life have been beautifully rendered by Amrit Rai in poignant prose. The economy of words in the original Hindi version is most impressive. Trivedi does full justice to this aspect in his translation.

"The news reached Lamahi. Members of the community began to gather.

"A bier was put together. By eleven o'clock, a procession of about 25 persons set out with a nameless corpse for the burning ghat of Manikarnika. On the way, one bystander asked another, 'Who was he?'

"The other replied, 'Oh, some school master'.

"Yonder in Bolepur, Tagore sighed softly, 'You had been given a gem and now you have lost it'."

1983

13. AFRICAN WRITERS AND AFRICAN WRITING THROUGH INDIAN EYES

I HAD, IN THE earlier days of my exploration, approached Africa, (south of the Sahara), through Western eyes. I was acquainted with the books of John Gunther, Joyce Carey, Graham Greene, Joseph Conrad, Albert Schweitzer, Andre Gide. As one totally and uncompromisingly opposed to injustice and oppression of any kind, I was naturally familiar with the autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah, President Kenyatta's Facing Mount Kenya, President Kaunda's Zambia Shall Be Free, President Nyerere's books, also Chief Albert Luthuli's book, Let My People Go. That was about all. I had heard of Mr. Nelson Mandela, and his stout-hearted opposition to apartheid. It was only after recently reading his book, No Easy Walk to Freedom that I realised the quality of his intellect, the high-mindedness of his political philosophy and his luminous courage. His statements at his trials have the same ring as Nehru's during his.

But I was totally unacquainted with the work of creative writers in Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania and South Africa. With negritude literature I was unfamiliar, except that I had heard the name of Leopold Senghor, President of Senegal, and Amie Cesaire, the fathers of negritude literature.

It soon became clear to me that anyone wishing to understand fully the forces which led to the emancipation of African colonies, it was indispensable to study the literature of the dark continent.

In 1945 there were only four independent African states, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia and South Africa. Today there are nearly fifty. The English-speaking have drawn inspiration from the Indian freedom movement, particularly from the example of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. In the French-speaking part of Africa, knowledge about pre-independence India was scarce and at least one state, north of the Sahara, considered Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence something of an irrelevance.

In his autobiography Kwame Nkrumah wrote,

> I devoted much energy to the study of revolutionaries and their methods. Those who interested me most were Hannibal, Cromwell, Napoleon, Lenin, Mazzini, Mahatma Gandhi, Mussolini and Hitler .... At first, I could not understand how Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence could possibly be effective. It seemed to me to be utterly feeble and without hope of success. The solution of the colonial problem, as I saw it at that time, lay in armed rebellion. How is it possible, I asked myself, for a revolution to succeed without arms and ammunition. After months of studying Gandhi's policy, and watching the effect it had, I begin to see that, when backed by a strong political organization it could be the solution to the colonial problem. In Jawaharlal Nehru's rise to power, I recognized the success of one who, pledged to socialism, was able to interpret Gandhi's philosophy in practical terms.

President Kenneth Kaunda in his autobiography, Zambia Shall Be Free, writes, "I was determined to combine Gandhi's policy of non-violence with Nkrumah's positive action." In South Africa, Chief Albert Lithuli drew sustenance and inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi. The countries of black Africa have different languages, different cultural and historical concerns but at the same time share certain common characteristics. These have been catalogued by Mr Claude Wauthier in his book, The Literature and Thought of Modern Africa. He writes,

> The first characteristic common to both (English-speaking and French-speaking Africans) is their political commitment which holds true for nearly all of them. Side by side with a politically committed literature, there is in present-day Africa a committed history, a committed ethnology and a committed theology. The black historian aims to denounce the barbarity of the colonial conquest, the ethnologist wishes to refute the prejudices which rate the African as a primitive savage, the theologian seeks to discover in the African tribal beliefs a more refined metaphysics, more closely akin to Christianity, than that which early missionaries had thought they had found. Even the

> study of linguistics has become a field of battle for African intellectuals.

However, African writers both in English and French have not tied themselves up in knots as we have. The famous Nigerian author Mr Chinua Achebe writes about his using English, "I have been given this language, and I intend to use it." President Leopold Senghor, when asked "Why do you Africans choose to write in French," replied, "we did not choose it, French chose us."

In a single article it is not possible to do justice to the vitality and earthy freshness of black African literature. I hope at a later date to write on Dominic Mulaisho's outstanding novel, **The Tongue of the Dumb**. He writes with such elegance – chapter 12 of his book begins thus,

> When Langwa river quarrels with Zambezi river the reeds know that they are not safe. When the elephant fights the lion it is the grass that suffers. Again, when the pestle pounds the wooden mortar it is the grain that suffers. So how could the teacher expect to escape the anger that had grown between Lubinda and Mpona? Already within the last few days the teacher had become an outcast again. The days of bitterness had returned.

I have thus confined myself to two outstanding creative writers. One a Nigerian the other Kenyan.

Chinua Achebe (born 1930) is the most important, creative and accomplished West African writer. His famous and widely read novel, **Things Fall Apart** (1958) takes its title from Yeats' celebrated poem, **The Second Coming**. The story opens in an Ibo village in Nigeria in the 1890s. The confrontation between the Ibos and the British colonialists, the machinations of the missionaries and the eventual annihilation and corruption of Ibo life makes it a remarkable work. The village falls apart and the progress of the disaster is carried over in subsequent novels, **No Longer At Ease** (1964) and **A Man of the People** (1966). One of the characters in **A Man of the People** which depicts life in Nigeria about the time of the Biafran war on seeing the Chief's bathroom exclaims – "I had to confess that if I were at that moment

made a Minister I would be most anxious to remain one for ever."

Achebe worked in senior positions with the Nigerian government for a number of years. Currently he is with the Department of English at Amherst. He is conscious of the limitations of African writing. At the same time he is proud of his own culture and history.

> The writer's duty is not to beat this morning's headline in topicality, it is to explore in depth the human condition. In Africa he cannot perform this task unless he has a proper sense of history.... We must first set the scene which is authentically African; then what follows will be meaningful and deep. This, I think, is what Aime Cesaire meant when he said that the short cut to the future is via the past.... Sophistication is no substitute for a spiritual search for one's roots.

Ngugi Wa Thiongo (who said Indian names were unpronounceable) also mercifully known as James Ngugi is a Kenyan. He is intellectually a Marxist and his writings are "committed" and have a cause to uphold and a case to denounce. **Weep Not, Child** and **The River Between** **A Grain of Wheat** span all the themes which have emerged in his writing from the anti-colonial struggles of the Mau Mau to the struggle of workers in the Kenya of today. Gikuyu and Christian myth-making are approached with candour and directness. The novels are autobiographical, particularly **Weep Not, Child**. He depicts the dilemma of man through the African ethos.

His novel **Petals of Blood** (1977) is a vigorous attack on life in contemporary Nairobi. He sees the lovely city degenerating into a pre-Castro Havana. It is a complex, prolix work, more political than creative, but always deeply felt and never phoney.

Finally something about the tragic country called South Africa. Black novelists, poets and dramatists have a terrible time to write and survive. Many have left, those remaining are picked up sooner than later. The Censorship Act of 1963 makes life very difficult for black writers. Yet Serote, Dennis Brutus, Althol Fugard keep the flame alive, lit thirty years

ago by Alan Paton, whose Cry, The Beloved Country despite its patronising tone is a landmark in the literary history of modern Africa. Ezekiel Mphahlele's autobiographical book Down Second Avenue is a fine example of "protest" literature. Peter Abrahams invites comparison with the American Negro writer Richard Wright whose Black Boy made such impact when it came out.

All strength to these brave men, who continue to prove that ideas conquer the world, that the pen is mightier than the sword.

1978

14. MEI LAN-FANG: PEKING OPERA STAR

IN THE CULTURAL LIFE of China the opera has long occupied a unique position. Patronage may have come from the rich and mighty but the opera itself has always been a thing of the people. In Peking, where it is particularly loved, they talk about going to ting (hear) rather than Kān (see) a performance.

Artistically, Peking opera is one of the most perfect things of its kind existing anywhere. It combines so many forms which in the western drama are separated. It is grand opera, ballet, an acrobatic performance and a historical play, all rolled into one.

To the sophisticated playgoer Peking opera might perhaps appear over-stylised and formal in many of its aspects. Yet, in spite of this formalism, it offers the individual actor great scope for innovation and for the projection of his personality into each gesture and movement.

The greatest name today in this medium is that of Mei Lan-fang. At sixty-four he is still at the height of his popularity. He comes of a distinguished family of actors. His grandfather and father were actors before him and he is followed by his son. The striking thing about the Meis is that they have always played female roles. For almost half a century Mei Lan-fang has enthralled Chinese and international audiences with his feminine parts.

The first time I saw him on the stage it virtually took my breath away. How a man of sixty-four could transform himself into a beautiful, delicate, nimble-footed girl of twenty seemed incredible. It is difficult to describe the effect he produces on his audience. Here is a performance of "faultless taste and grace, beauty and brilliance of colour and movement, subtlety, clarity and profundity of expression, perfect unity of voice and gesture." I came back from the show dazed. It had been a feast for the eye and mind and had left in me a deep feeling of joyful satisfaction.

There are four major types of characters in the Peking opera. Sheng (males), Tan (females), Chin (painted-faced

generals and suchlike) and Chou (clowns). Mei Lan-fang is one of the very few actors who are adept at playing all the various types of Tan: Ching-yi (the good, honest type), Hua-tan (the coquettish and worldly) and Taoma-tan (the warrior-maid type). He has also set new and high standards in costuming and make-up and added many innovations in choreography and acting.

Peking opera actors are not born, they are made and made the hard way. Mei Lan-fang started his stage training at the age of eight. From that time to the present day he has not stopped learning. I was told by his intimate friend, Lao Sheh, the famous author of The Rickshaw Boy, that even on train journeys the great man practises his roles and does his exercises to keep his body fit and in good shape.

Like all noted Chinese actors, Mei Lan-fang in his youth had mastered over hundred roles. But now he has a carefully selected repertoire. The Drunken Beauty, the story of the famous Chinese beauty Yang Kuei-fei who, when neglected and spurned by the Emperor, takes to drink to drown her grief is acclaimed as one of his finest creations. The other two widely known and popular roles are Beauty Defies Tyranny and The Tale of the White Snake. The former tells of the chastity and fortitude of a woman in ancient times who refuses her father's command to marry a tyrannical emperor and feigns insanity. The latter is the story of the white lady, metamorphosed from a snake, who loves and marries a young man called Hsu Hsien. But the path of true love never did run smoothly. A scheming monk works against them and the white lady implores him in vain to stop his evil machinations.

Mei Lan-fang is not only a great artiste, he is also a great gentleman. His humility, his generosity, his kindness, his love of personal relationships have endeared him to his countrymen hardly less than his acting and singing. His fame is not confined to China alone. He has travelled widely. In 1930, for instance, he met Uday Shankar in New York (they met again in Peking in 1957 after twenty-seven years).

Recently Mei Lan-fang was asked when he would retire from the stage and this is what the Director of the Opera Research Institute of China (his official designation) said: "I

will stop appearing on the stage only when I can no longer perform."

1958

15. NEW DELHI NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT

We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale. We believe that peace and freedom are indivisible and the denial of freedom anywhere must endanger freedom elsewhere and lead to conflict and war....

The world, in spite of its rivalries and hatreds and inner conflicts, moves inevitably towards closer cooperation and building up a world commonwealth. It is for this one world that free India will work, a world in which there is the free cooperation of free peoples, and no class or group exploits another.

—Jawaharlal Nehru, 1946

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU ENRICHED THE vocabulary of international relations by providing the concept of non-alignment to it. He made the political processes coherent and noble. His name will be on every lip during the Summit. His life-enhancing vision, his soundness of judgement, his political foresight, his subtle and shrewd understanding of the temper of the times are now ungrudgingly acknowledged by all. When the chill winds of the cold war swept the earth, when shrill rhetoric made dispassionate, balanced and objective appraisal of world issues difficult, Nehru came up with an alternative way to tackle the ills of the world.

India would not be a camp follower. We were willing to stand up and be counted. We would judge each issue on its merit, bearing in mind our vital national interests. We would be non-aligned, not neutral. We would not be a client state. We would join no military block or group. Nehru preached the gospel of peace, of co-existence, "Either we co-exist or we co-perish". He denounced the arms race. Co-operation, conciliation, not confrontation and conflict, could make the world a bearable place to live in. He was a path-finder. He raised the level of international political, diplomatic and economic dialogue. He did not speak in vain.

That nearly hundred countries find it worth their while to

call themselves non-aligned is a tribute to the far-sightedness of Nehru, Nasser and Tito. One does not join a club with a dwindling membership or put money in a bank on which there is a run. This is not to suggest that the non-aligned movement faces no challenges from within or without. Differences do exist. These are discussed openly and freely, not brushed under the carpet. However, there is broad consensus on major political and economic questions. No country wants to inflict on NAM the fate of certain other international organisations. No one wants to transmit the divisive scenario of the U.N. General Assembly to NAM deliberations.

What are the issues before the Summit? – Peace, disarmament and development. The three are indivisible. Also indispensable for the welfare of the human race. They encompass the lengthy political and economic agenda of the Summit. The Seventh Summit meets at a crucial time. The international political landscape does not look inviting. The Cold War appears to be staging a come-back. The arms race continues unabated. The economic horizon has not been darker for half a century and the new international economic order remains a distant goal.

The world needs political first aid and economic "blood transfusion". It needs something more – a climate of peaceful co-existence, co-operation and constructive co-operation.

Extract from a speech delivered during the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit, 1983.

16. INDIA AND NON-ALIGNMENT: BELGRADE TO DELHI

NON-ALIGNMENT IS A FAITH, not a business. It is a need, not a creed. Its declarations may not be marked by a fluid facility (not easy to attain in four languages) nor do they always succeed in condensing wisdom into an impressive brevity. These declarations do, however, reflect the aspirations and hopes of a very large proportion of mankind. They also attempt to offer peaceful solutions to major problems that beset the world community.

Old attitudes and habits die hard. As I was working on this article I picked up Volume 7 of the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Micropaedia Section) to see what it had to say about "non-alignment". On page 380, against non-alignment is the entry—see neutralism. And that was that! A scarcely believable aberration.

The First Non-Aligned Heads of State/Government Summit was held in Belgrade on 1 September 1961, "for the purpose of exchanging views on international problems with a view to contributing more effectively to world peace and security and peaceful cooperation among peoples." The twenty-five Heads of State/Government who attended included Jawaharlal Nehru, U Nu, Ahmed Soekarno, Gemal Abdul Nasser, Kwame Nkrumah and Joseph Broz Tito. Their names are written in the chronicles of fame. It is interesting to dwell at some length on the Belgrade Summit which gave content, purpose and definite meaning to the Non-Aligned Movement, which had its origin in a speech that Jawaharlal Nehru delivered in 1946:

> We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale. We believe that peace and freedom are indivisible and the denial of freedom anywhere must endanger freedom elsewhere and lead to conflict and war.

The concept of non-alignment was further evolved at the Bandung Conference in 1955 and a year later when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Presidents Nasser and Tito met at Brioni. The Belgrade declaration is a document of lofty idealism and hard-headed realism. It is an inspiring document. The Agenda for the Belgrade meeting was short. Just five items dealing with political and economic matters, with peace and disarmament. The Conference made an appeal to the two Super Powers calling upon them to pause and reflect before plunging the world into a nuclear cauldron.

The Second Conference was held at Cairo in 1964.By then the membership of the Movement had grown to forty-seven. The number of observer countries went up from three at Belgrade to ten. The O.A.U., the Arab League and other national liberation movements were given Observer status.

In 1967, no Summit was held in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli War. When the Movement held its Summit at Lusaka in 1970, the membership increased only by six. But three years later at Algiers the Movement had grown to seventy-five. The figure of eighty-six was reached at Colombo in 1976. At Havana in 1979 there were ninety-three full Members, twenty Observers and twenty Guests. The Agenda had grown to twenty-seven subjects ranging from the review and appraisal of the international political situation to the strengthening of the solidarity and social and economic co-operation among non-aligned and developing countries. Economic, financial and trade matters along with scientific and technical issues dominated.

As numbers increased so did the size of the Agenda and the length of the final declarations. From Lusaka started the practice of the Chairman of the Movement addressing the U.N. on its behalf. At Algiers the Standing Committee of the Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement was converted into the Coordinating Bureau which met between Summits. At Colombo Summit in 1976 a formal decision was taken to set up the Coordinating Bureau consisting of twenty-five member countries, chosen by the Heads of State/Government of non-aligned countries, taking into consideration the principles of balanced geographical distribution, continuity and rotation. The Coordinating Bureau was

to meet: (i) at the level of the Minister of Foreign Affairs or Special Government Representatives once a year or as necessary; (ii) on a continuing basis at the level of Permanent Representatives of non-aligned countries at the U.N. Headquarters once a month as a rule.

The Seventh Summit was originally scheduled to be held in Baghdad. This was not to be and the Chairman of the Sixth Summit, President Fidel Castro of Cuba, ascertained the wishes of all members of the Movement with regard to shifting the venue of the Seventh Summit. The overwhelming response was to invite India to host the Seventh Summit. We were given less than six months to organise an undertaking for which the normal lead period is three years. At the Delhi Summit, ninety-seven full members will attend. Two Latin American countries have asked for full membership. The number of Observers and Guests will be over forty. The agenda is to consist of twenty items but is not simply a hectic accumulation of unrelated subjects lacking focus or thrust.

At the New Delhi Summit under the chairmanship of Mrs Indira Gandhi, political, economic, social, trade and technological matters, disarmament and its implications for international security and economic and social development will be discussed. An overall review and assessment of the world economic situation and international economic relations, and the position of the developing countries in the world economy will be deliberated upon. These will include global negotiation, establishing guidelines for the preparatory work of the Sixth UNCTAD in order to have a unified position for non-aligned and other developing countries during that session.

The Non-Aligned Movement is not a monolithic block but an association of like-minded nations who wish to discuss issues at the highest level, in an atmosphere of friendliness. While calm detachment may not always be in evidence, cultivated courtesies are. The Movement represents different political, social and economic perceptions and concerns. The Delhi Summit meets at a crucial and tense moment in world history. Neither the political nor economic climate looks promising. It is earnestly hoped that the Summit will be constructive and emphasis will be on cooperation not confrontation, objective discussion not denunciation, accommodation not acrimony. The Summit must get down to serious business

and not depart from the fundamental and deeper postulates which had engaged its founders, and not be diverted to address itself to secondary and parochial issues which are time-consuming and non-profitable. Too much is at stake.

The Non-Aligned Movement has survived and grown against heavy odds. It has survived because its members, whether they be Africans, Asians, Latin Americans, black, white, brown or yellow, do not wish to barter away or mortgage their independence to one super power or the other. They have no desire to forego their independence of judgement and freedom of action. The Movement has in the past, on a number of occasions, succeeded in combining a width of judgement with resolute action. It has on the whole stayed the course and its track record is not to be scoffed at.

The very fact that ninety-eight countries consider it worth their while to meet at Delhi is a living proof of the correctness and far-sighted realism of that great visionary and statesman, Jawaharlal Nehru. It was his example and that of his colleagues in Yugoslavia, Egypt, Indonesia, Ghana and other parts of the world that gave hope and courage to young people the world over. There was now an alternative to the debased rhetoric of the Cold War. The Non-Aligned meet was ridiculed and its demise forecast more than once. The traditional non-aligned -baiters were proved wrong. They were mixing hopes with facts.

The founding fathers of the Movement had a deep and subtle perception of the nature of the world that emerged at the end of the Second World War. More than any other leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, with his deep knowledge of history and his understanding of the historical process with rare clarity and perception saw through the hollowness and total inadequacy of classical doctrines of the balance of power and announced that Nineteenth Century concepts offered no answers to Twentieth Century problems.

India, the host country, approaches the Summit with cautious optimism, confidence tempered with realism and faith undiminished.

1983

17. INDIA AND THE COMMONWEALTH

I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU all for turning up to hear me this morning in spite of so many other attractions. The opening of Parliament has prevented Mr. James Callaghan and several High Commissioners to be present. As for the World Cup Cricket match between India and England, I wish India success and England luck.

When Mr. Peter Lyon first extended an invitation to me to speak on "India and the Commonwealth", I felt greatly honoured, while doubting my own capacity to fulfil his or your expectations. My acquaintance with and knowledge of Commonwealth affairs is not particularly extensive. My direct contacts with the Commonwealth have been at a modest official level. The main reason why the choice fell on me must be the fact of my appointment as Chief Coordinator of the forthcoming meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government in New Delhi.

Having said this, I should in fairness tell you that I have been witness to one kind of Commonwealth activity at Kingston and Lusaka where Commonwealth countries, by and large, displayed a positive desire to cooperate, consult and conciliate. I witnessed another kind at the United Nations in New York, where a less congenial and friendly atmosphere prevailed among the members of the old and the new Commonwealth. Having seen both sides of the Commonwealth coin, I hope I can take an objective and dispassionate view of India's membership of the Commonwealth. Objectivity and absence of passion do not quicken the pulse or stir the air, and I have not been able to persuade myself I shall be saying anything which is likely to excite your intellect or satisfy your curiosity.

May I also make it clear that whatever I say this morning, does not reflect on the policies or the views of the Government of India. I speak here in my personal capacity. In case you discern some resemblance between what I say and the policies of the Government of India, it is nothing but a happy coincidence.

I might at this stage warn you that I shall not be offering any illuminating shafts of blinding insights into India's association with the Commonwealth or the Commonwealth's association with India. I belong to the last generation of Indians, who were at Oxbridge and whose thought processes were perilously close to being alien rather than indigenous. It is a dying species. The future generations will not suffer from similar attacks of nostalgia, nor will they have the hang-ups which we carry. The future Parliamentarians, educationists, journalists, professors and teachers from Commonwealth countries will attach less value to what they consider irrelevant for their purposes, and see the British connection in a new and realistic light.

While I do not believe in crystal-gazing, I can venture to suggest that the future of the Commonwealth will largely be in the hands of people whose direct exposure to the United Kingdom has been minimal. It is the strength of the Commonwealth that its leaders have realised this. The Commonwealth ceased to be Anglocentric sometime ago. This is as it should be and we welcome it.

A vast literature exists on the Commonwealth ranging from the massive Tome of Mr. Hall to the masterly work of Mr. Ramphal. A number of worthwhile and lively books have been written on India's association with the Commonwealth by scholars in this country and India. There also exists a little-known lecture by Mr. C.D. Deshmukh, a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, who served as Finance Minister in Mr. Nehru's Governments from 1950-56. His Smuts Memorial Lecture in Cambridge offers a solid, but somewhat old-fashioned approach to the Commonwealth.

If we have to make any sense out of India's membership of the Commonwealth, then we should acquire some knowledge of India's freedom struggle. Under Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian national movement was committed to a purpose and the doctrine of non-violence. That purpose was the attainment of India's freedom through peaceful means. Gandhi also tried to awaken human conscience on a global scale, that right means and wrong ends were not likely to contribute to the happiness and welfare of mankind. India's foreign policy is a projection of the values which we have

cherished through the centuries. These formed the ethos of our national movement. We are not tied to the traditional concepts of a foreign policy designed to safeguard overseas possessions, investments, interests or the carving out areas of influence. We have never exported ideologies, only ideas relating to peace and peaceful co-existence, freedom and international co-operation.

Before independence, India as part of the British Empire had been allowed to play an insignificant and subservient role as a member of the League of Nations and as a signatory of the Treaty of Versailles. In both we were instruments of the dictates of our masters. Only a free India could play any meaningful role in world affairs. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, before he became Prime Minister, had for many years single-handedly made the Indian National Congress and the Indian people aware of India's responsibilities in the field of foreign affairs. He had thought long and deeply over the role an independent India would play in world affairs. As one Indian put it,

> The most vital ingredients in our foreign policy, without which India could not have survived all these years, is the passion of our people for independence and courage in safeguarding it under all conditions. Jawaharlal Nehru embodied both these vital elements. Time and again, he made our people feel that even though we were poor, we are proud.

Nehru's foreign policy has stood the test of time. India is the only country which has not, in any substantial manner, jettisoned any of its basic foreign policy precepts. I am not suggesting that we have adopted a rigid or wooden posture in the foreign policy arena; that would invite censure. We have, as sensible and mature people adjusted our foreign policy wherever it has been necessary, without in any way departing from our basic commitment to peace or sacrificing our vital national interests. India's foreign policy for the last three and a half decades shows that it is possible to combine the two.

Nehru did not believe in the fragmentary interpretation of human civilisation. He arrived at this conclusion not sudden-

ly, but by a long process of serious thought. In the 1920s 30s and 40s, Nehru was an uncompromising opponent of British Imperialism and made it abundantly clear that once India became free it would sever every link with the Imperial Power. But even when he was most critical of British rule, he did not confuse the Government of Britain with the people of Britain. Nehru spent two years in England and Europe in 1926-27. He also paid a visit to the Soviet Union at the time of the 10th Anniversary of the Soviet Revolution. He had read widely and was much influenced by the Fabians. He was also familiar with the works of Marx and Lenin. He returned to India a radical. In 1927, he was a young and rising politician. He wanted the Indian National Congress to opt for complete independence and not dominion status. In this he had differed with his father Pandit Motilal Nehru and other senior leaders of an older mould who did not want a complete break with Britain. Mahatma Gandhi termed the quarrel between India and England a family quarrel. At the Calcutta Congress in 1928 the senior leaders of the Congress were able to overrule the young Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose, but a year later at Lahore, the Indian National Congress under Jawaharlal's presidentship declared for complete independence. The inner contradictions within the party were never wholly reconciled with regard to the Commonwealth link as is clear from what Mahatma Gandhi said at the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1931:

> The Congress contemplates a connection with the British people. But that connection be such as can exist between two absolute equals—I have aspired—I still aspire—to be a citizen, not in the Empire but in a Commonwealth; in partnership if possible—if God wills it an indissoluble partnership—but not a partnership superimposed upon one nation by another. Hence you find that the Congress plans that either party should have the right to sever a connection to dissolve the partnership.

In the middle thirties the British government's ambivalence to the rise of Fascism created an adverse impression on the mind of Nehru. So it was a normal expectation that an independent India under Nehru would opt out of the Common-

wealth. Minus India the Commonwealth would have been reduced to a shadow without substance. The consequences would have been rather drastic. Therefore, the decision of India to retain its membership of the Commonwealth as a Republic was not only novel but historic and more significant in Commonwealth history than the Durham Report of 1839 and the Statute of Westminster of 1931 which abolished the United Kingdom's right to pass laws applied to other Commonwealth countries.

A number of distinguished individuals have taken credit for India's decision to remain in the Commonwealth, but the people who really mattered were Prime Ministers Attlee and Nehru, Lord Mountbatten and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister in Pandit Nehru's Government. Mr. Krishna Menon also lent his considerable skill and weight in favour of the Commonwealth link. The question had come up soon after India became independent. Pandit Nehru consulted his senior colleagues in the Congress Party, specially Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari. He had no intention of railroading a decision. As a true democrat he took the Constituent Assembly of India and the Congress Party into confidence. In December 1948 at the annual session of the Congress Party in Jaipur, Nehru piloted the Resolution which said that India would welcome her free association with independent nations of the Commonwealth for their common welfare in the promotion of world peace. Fortified with this Resolution and the approval of his senior colleagues Pandit Nehru went to London in April 1949. At this momentous meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers a revolutionary decision was taken by which India as a sovereign democratic republic was enabled to retain its Commonwealth association. Many hours and days were spent in working out a delicate formula which was acceptable to all the dominions and the British government. The position of the King as the symbol of the free association of its independent member nations and as such the head of the Commonwealth was approved. Since I am discussing India's association with the Commonwealth I think it would be useful to recall the words of the declaration:

> The Government of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, whose countries are united as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations and owe a common allegiance to the Crown, which is also the symbol of their free association, have considered the impending constitutional changes in India. The Government of India have informed the other governments of the Commonwealth of the intention of the Indian people that under the new constitution which is about to be adopted, India shall become a sovereign independent republic. The Government of India have, however, declared and affirmed India's desire to continue her full membership of the Commonwealth of Nations and her acceptance of the King as the symbol of the free association of its independent member nations, and as such the Head of the Commonwealth.
>
> The governments of the other countries of the Commonwealth, the basis of whose membership of the Commonwealth is not hereby changed, accept and recognise India's continuing membership in accordance with the terms of this declaration. Accordingly, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan and Ceylon hereby declare that they remain united as free and equal members of the Commonwealth of Nations, freely cooperating in the pursuit of peace, liberty and progress.

On his return to Delhi, the Prime Minister broadcast to the Indian nation:

> It is right that I should report to you about this meeting, which resulted in a fateful and historic decision. That decision will have to be placed before the Constituent Assembly for their approval. It will also be considered by the All-India Congress Committee.... (He continued) You have already read the declaration embodying the conclusions reached by the London meeting. The impression that I have gathered since my return is that the vast majority of our people has welcomed the decision, though there are some who have criticized in strong language what I did and have called it "a great blunder" and "an outrage on the

national sentiments of the Indian people". During a fairly long career in India's service I have often been accused of errors and mistakes, but I have never yet been charged with doing anything which was against the honour and self-respect of India or her people. It is a serious matter, therefore, if even a few persons, whose opinions I value, should consider that I have committed an outrage.

I want to tell you that I have not the least doubt in my mind that I have adhered in letter and spirit to every pledge that I, in common with millions of my countrymen, have taken in regard to the independence of India during the past twenty years and more. I am convinced that far from injuring the honour or interest of India, the action I took in London has kept that honour bright and shining and enhanced her position in the world.

On the 16th of May 1949 Pandit Nehru moved a Motion in the Constituent Assembly which read:

> Resolved that this Assembly do hereby ratify the declaration, agreed to by the Prime Minister of India, on the continued membership of India in the Commonwealth of nations, as set out in the official statement issued at the conclusion of the Conference of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London on April 27, 1949.

The Constituent Assembly adopted the historic Motion. Pandit Nehru in his exposition emphasised the friendly approach. He emphasised that association with the Commonwealth would not restrict our freedom in any way and he was at great pains to point out that India's continued membership was in no way inconsistent with any pledge taken by the Indian National Congress. He said India's dignity and honour are not being compromised. He took the debate to a high level and said that goodwill begets goodwill. India's membership of the Commonwealth would help develop our closer relations with other countries and it would not come in the way of our cooperation and friendship with countries who are not in the Commonwealth. A complete break would mean insulation and then he said that the positive value of continued association was that it brought a

touch of healing to India's relations with the outside world. Pandit Nehru then highlighted the practical and realistic aspects. He said India joined the Commonwealth because it was beneficial to her and to certain causes in the world which we wish to advance. It is now generally acknowledged that Nehru's decision created the New Commonwealth and helped enlarge and broaden the scope of its discussions on the pressing problems of the world. Nehru's rejection of the grossly inadequate theme of a bipolar world enabled newly independent Asian, African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to adopt non-alignment as their policy. Nehru laid great stress on interdependence. Collective consultation was anyway better than confrontation. The big stick was not a civilised instrument of diplomacy. He was a crusader for peace and peaceful co-existence. What were the reasons which made Nehru, the most articulate and open critic of British imperialism, join the Commonwealth? He was what we might call a practical idealist. It was manifestly to India's advantage to retain an international connection when it was just emerging from the shadows of colonialism. There were weighty short- and long-term advantages behind India's decision. Trade, finance, economic assistance and defence were the chief elements. In 1947 the bulk of India's foreign trade was with the U.K. Exports to Commonwealth countries had the benefit of Commonwealth preference. India was a member of the Sterling area and we had a claim on the Sterling balances which India had earned for wartime supplies to HMG. If we had left the Commonwealth we would have considerably weakened our claim to them.

In the field of defence organisation and supplies the Indo-British link was equally strong. India would for some time to come depend heavily on Britain for repair and replacements of military hardware.

In addition, India's political, judicial and administrative establishments had a distinct Anglo-Saxon imprint. A dramatic or drastic change of gear would only add to India's problems. Nehru drew the attention of the Constituent Assembly to this aspect:

> We cannot be absolutely cut off from the world. Now, the House knows that inevitably during the past century or

> more all kinds of contacts have arisen between England and this country, many of them were bad, very bad, and we have struggled throughout our lives to put an end to them. Many of them were not so bad, many of them may be good and many of them good or bad, irrespective of what they may be are there. Here I am the patent example of these contacts, speaking in this House in the English language.... the fact remains that we are functioning here under certain rules and regulations for which the model has been the British constitution. Those laws which exist today have been largely forged by them. Gradually, the laws which are good we will keep and those that are bad we will throw away. Any marked change in this without something to follow creates a hiatus which may be harmful.

I have purposely given you this background in order to stress the importance of India's decision to remain in the Commonwealth. Mr. Derek Ingram in his book Commonwealth for a Colour Blind World has made two candid observations. He writes, "The Commonwealth exists simply and solely because of India." Now if an Indian had said that he would have got into serious trouble. I do not have to comment on this observation except to say that India contributes seven hundred million people to the Commonwealth's total population of thousand million. Two out of three members of the Commonwealth are Indians. Later in his book, being the realist he is, he remarks that "it is important not to have illusions about the Commonwealth. Some critics say that we in Britain have an unfettered idea of its importance that nowhere in the world does it look so large in political thinking as it does in Britain. To some extent there is truth in these charges." His next comment is even more realistic. He says,

> We would be fooling ourselves if we thought that in India the Commonwealth was a subject of discussion on every lip. The reality is that one could tour India for months, meet all manner of intelligent people and not hear the Commonwealth mentioned once in any conversation. In

> the Congress Party Manifesto for the 1962 Elections, the last in which Mr Nehru participated, there is not a mention of the Commonwealth.

I think I should elaborate on this. Indian attitudes to the Commonwealth have on the whole been alternating between benign acquiescence and critical questioning. As the years rolled by, there was a shift in priorities within the Commonwealth. Asian and African countries, Caribbean and South Pacific countries became active participants in the United Nations and the Specialised Agencies, in the Organisation of African Unity, the Non-Aligned Movement; the older members of the Commonwealth went a different way. The UK and Canada became members of NATO; Australia and New Zealand of SEATO; Pakistan of CENTO. Later the UK's entry into the EEC had an adverse impact on India's trade and commerce and Commonwealth preferences disappeared.

On a number of vital issues for India, the UK and one or two other Commonwealth countries took a stand which caused deep offence in India. India was disillusioned by the UK's pronouncements and partisan stand in the Security Council on Kashmir. Documents since published reveal the highly partisan activity of Mr Philip Noel Baker. The Suez Canal issue nearly tore the Commonwealth apart. Britain's decision not to consult Commonwealth Governments before taking action all but broke the Commonwealth. Even the Canadians were exasperated with the British. It was during the Suez crisis that India and Canada came closer and the phrase "Ottawa-Delhi axis" gained currency. The Afro-Asian members (except Pakistan) of course wholly supported Egypt. In the Security Council debates on Kashmir in 1957, Mr Nehru found British attitude so unacceptable that he said that the time had perhaps come for India to have a second look at her membership of the Commonwealth.

At the United Nations too, the UK found itself in the questionable company of Salazar's Portugal, Franco's Spain and Vorster's South Africa at a time when Commonwealth members from Asia, Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean were working for the early liquidation of colonial empires and the termination of racist rule in Southern Africa.

When Mr Wilson assumed office in 1964 it was hoped that we would take a strong stand against Mr Ian Smith but our hopes were belied and even the British representative in the Trusteeship Council and the Committee of Twenty Four, Sir Hugh Foot resigned, protesting against the inactivity of the British Government.

Then for a short while the pendulum swung the other way. The British Government refused to invoke its Treaty with Portugal when India liberated Goa in 1961 although the speeches of British delegates at the U.N. were not helpful. India greatly appreciated the prompt manner in which Mr Macmillan's Government gave moral and material support to India at the time of the Chinese invasion in 1962. During this period India's relations with other Commonwealth countries strengthened, particularly with Canada and of course with all African countries, with one or two exceptions. Here too, the situation depended on how the people of Indian origin in these countries were treated. For us it was a matter of very great pride that a large number of students from Africa, Caribbean and South Pacific countries attended India's Universities and returned to take up positions of high responsibility. Two Prime Ministers of Zambia, one President of Ghana, one President of Nigeria and many senior Ministers of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Mauritius and other Commonwealth countries received their higher education in India. India's total commitment to the eradication of colonialism and racism in all its forms was greatly welcomed by the people of Africa. In the years soon after independence it was the Indian delegation at the U.N., in the Fourth Committee and later in the Committee of Twenty Four that had taken up the issues of the independence of colonial territories with vigour and resolution. This naturally strained our relations with the U.K., with Australia and South Africa. In 1954 India in spite of the fact that it had nearly a million Indians living in South Africa and in spite of the fact that we had considerable trade with that country severed all relations with that country. It was during this period that the Commonwealth group at the U.N. faded away. The Afro-Asian group gathered strength, influence and authority. During my entire time at the United Nations I know of only

one or two occasions when the British delegates consulted us. The U.K. delegation generally kept aloof from the Afro-Asian group and seldom deemed it necessary to exchange views with them in order to narrow down their differences. Thus Britain became more and more isolated from its Afro-Asian colleagues of the Commonwealth. This, particularly so in the case of Southern Rhodesia. For fourteen years successive British Governments dragged their feet and as Mr. Arnold Smith says:

> The subject of Rhodesia always remained the slippery subject for the Commonwealth and other Governments to handle and this suited British Prime Ministers for each of them in his turn said that on the one hand it was a domestic affair for Britain and the administering authority but, on the other hand, the British had no direct control, since Southern Rhodesia had been a self-governing colony since 1923. Britain was relied upon by Commonwealth governments for most of their information on sanctions, just as they pressed Britain to take constitutional steps that would lead to majority rule. Although they were sceptical about how sharply economic sanctions were biting, they did not dream of mistrusting Britain to the extent of believing that British-controlled companies, one of them (British Petroleum) government owned, were the main sanctions-busters — at least, not until revelations began to surface in 1977 with the investigations by Martin Bailey and Bernard Rivers, and the inside information from Mozambique of Jorge Jardim.

Conclusion

I have said enough about the past. We must now look to the future. What future does the Commonwealth have in the remaining years of the 20th Century? Is it likely to play a central role in providing the healing touch of which Nehru spoke or will it be reduced to a talking shop and remain result-oriented only in marginal economic and political matters? Any organisation, any institution, is what its members make of it. The Commonwealth has some uncommon features — it has no constitution or charter; its members are not bound by any treaty; its distinctive marks are infor-

mality, creative flexibility, emphasis on cooperation.consultation and mutual assistance. It has no executive role. It has evolved its own practices. It is now a well-respected convention, though broken sometimes by one or two members, that bilateral issues are not to be raised. This informality has been noted beyond the Commonwealth. This is apparent from the fact that the Commonwealth technique has, to some extent now, been adopted by the EEC and the Summits of the seven industrialised countries. When Commonwealth Heads, ministers, officials, artists, journalists, teachers, sportsmen get together, the ice is broken sooner than it is in other organisations. The English language helps. In an inter-dependent world, the Commonwealth can and should play a helpful and useful role. I believe it can be particularly attractive and meaningful to some of the less developed small island territories in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific. Even for bigger countries, it can through the CFTC, make a significant contribution.

The most spectacular success that the Commonwealth has to its credit in recent years is Zimbabwe. We have met with less success on Namibia. In the Contact Group of Five, two senior members of the Commonwealth are included. It is, therefore, a natural expectation that the Commonwealth will play a role in Namibian affairs and certainly do so after Namibia has attained independence. As of today, the picture is not so promising. This question was taken up at the Arusha Meeting of the Senior Officials and will, no doubt, be again taken up at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in New Delhi. So long as the South Africans know that Western. countries will not go beyond a point in putting the heat on and subscribe to mandatory sanctions — they will continue to be intransigent and flout U.N. Resolutions.

Those of us, who belong to the Commonwealth and are involved in its day-to-day working, tend to pitch up our expectations rather high. On the other hand, the non-Commonwealth countries may not attach too much importance to the Commonwealth. In my view, there is a middle position between these two extreme views — the Commonwealth has the experience, the skills, the personnel, to identify problems, to offer helpful solutions. Some of its members have great

influence, some have considerable wealth, others have manpower, many have natural resources – mineral wealth, oil. Commonwealth authors, poets, novelists, have world-wide readership. The Commonwealth has a standing in the international community. A multiracial Commonwealth is a useful forum and can contribute to the efforts that are being made for the maintenance of international peace and a new world order. As Mrs Indira Gandhi told the CHOGRM Heads of Government in September 1981, the Commonwealth could build a bridge of understanding between the Great powers. It should continue to raise its voice against racial prejudice and discrimination. While I am fully alive to the limitation of the Commonwealth I agree with Secretary-General Ramphal that the Commonwealth cannot negotiate for the world, but it can help the world to negotiate.

The New Delhi Commonwealth Summit will naturally arouse expectations and interest both within and outside India. On its outcome will depend the role the Commonwealth can play in the remaining years of the century.

To be an effective, lively and meaningful instrument, the Commonwealth must produce results, must galvanize the negotiating processes and become a relevant factor in the crusade for peace, disarmament and development. Can it meet the challenge?

Speech delivered at the Royal Commonwealth Society, London, June, 1983

18. OF DIPLOMACY AND DIPLOMATS

WHEN ANDRÉ MALRAUX MET Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, he asked him, "Tell me, Mr Chairman, what has been the effect of the French Revolution on China?" There was a pause. Then Mao looked Malraux straight in the face and replied, "It is too early to say."

I have only spent twenty-five years in the Indian Foreign Service and it is, therefore, rash of me to undertake writing this article. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread, but I have always liked to live dangerously. I like to have a go at things.

The perils of introspection are not unknown to me and I fall a prey to them from time to time. I do so now.

Has it been worth it? Perhaps it is too early to say, perhaps too late. Incredible good fortune has come my way. I have seen and visited nearly ninety of the world's capital cities, thirty in the company of a Prime Minister. To represent independent India has been inspiring, exciting, exhausting, rewarding and exhilarating. It has also been a sacred trust. Few other professions offer such varied experiences or opportunities.

The profession of diplomacy is criticised, maligned, envied, ridiculed, but seldom understood and the widespread impression about diplomats is not flattering. Charles Thayer in his book Diplomat, writes, "Coddled and pampered behind this formidable barrier of international law and custom, untouchable by the police, beyond the reach of the tax collector and the customs inspector, the diplomatic corps, one might suppose, would be the world's greatest breeding ground for adult delinquents." The reality is somewhat different.

Often friends ask me, "Tell us what do you actually do, apart from attending dinners and receptions, sitting in a chauffeur-driven Mercedes, flying a flag and buying duty-free goods?" And they go on, "Why is it necessary to maintain such expensive diplomatic establishments when Heads of Government and Foreign Ministers meet so often, when the telephone and the telegraph have made communication

almost instantaneous. Aren't you fellows out of date....?" These are legitimate questions and deserve serious consideration. I shall try and answer them.

Diplomacy is a profession. It is a craft in which, contrary to popular belief, craftiness has no place. If there is one human activity where the 11th Commandment, "Thou shalt not be found out" does not hold good it is diplomacy. It is wiser and safer to be honest and unspectacular than to be flamboyant and false. It is an area of work where it is tempting to cut a figure. That temptation should be strenuously resisted.

Diplomacy is defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary as "the management of or skill in managing international relations." But the word "diplomatic" is put down to mean, "deceitful". Matters were made worse by Sir Henry Watton who unwisely described an ambassador as "an honest man who is sent to lie abroad for the good of his country." He lived to regret it but nothing sticks like a falsehood and his later advice, that "an Ambassador to be serviceable to his country should always speak the truth" is hardly ever recalled.

What counts in the long run is character, integrity, dedication, hard work. Harold Nicolson in his durable little book Diplomacy, wrote, "these then are the qualities of my ideal diplomatist: Truth, accuracy, calm, patience, good temper, modesty, loyalty. They are also the qualities of an ideal diplomacy." Nicolson goes on, " 'But' the reader may object, 'you have forgotten intelligence, knowledge, discernment, prudence, hospitality, charm, industry, courage and even tact.' I have not forgotten them. I have taken them for granted."

Diplomacy in practice means conducting relations with foreign powers on the basis of policies decided by the government of a country. Diplomats are the instruments that implement policy, by explaining it, defending it, analysing it. More often than not, this is done in an environment not always congenial, to governments not always friendly, to people not always well informed, to a media not always sympathetic or to an audience not always attentive. The object is to influence their thinking, correct their prejudices, remove

their misconceptions, soothe their sensitiveness, arouse their interest and do all this quietly and by peaceful means. To achieve this a country must have a highly professional foreign service. Regrettably many countries in the developing world fail to see the connection between the two. You can't project a good image with imperfect tools.

Let me elaborate. Each country has a foreign policy and each country wants to safeguard its vital national interests without unduly treading on other peoples' toes. Decisions of foreign policy are generally the result of a mixture of motives, self-interest, regional loyalty, international obligations, compromise, the satisfying of pressure groups.

Since each State is trying to do more or less the same thing – widen its sphere of influence, increase trade, export more, import less – life becomes very difficult. Classical diplomacy was conducted in a leisurely fashion on the basis of mutual self-interest by a handful of European powers. This is no longer so.

During the past thirty years dramatic and drastic changes have taken place in the field of diplomatic activity. Between 1822 and 1870 there were two to six embassies in London. In 1914 there were nine. The United States raised their legation in London to an embassy in 1893 – 115 years after their independence. Today London has 140 Foreign Missions. In New Delhi we have over a hundred, in Lusaka nearly forty.

There was a time not too long ago when a diplomat was a man apart and privileged, leading a sheltered existence, in great cities like Paris and Rome, Vienna and London. He was known for his sartorial elegance, his gastronomical fastidiousness, his amorous agility, for his capacity to consume large quantities of alcohol, for his charm, his wit, his conversation. He knew everyone worth knowing i.e. the ruling few. The diplomatic bag would arrive once in two months, visitors from home were infrequent. His despatches would be written in excellent prose and known for their liveliness. If he represented a power like England or France then he could arrange for a gun-boat or two to appear to keep the natives in their place. His person was sacrosanct, his mission immune and he lived happily ever after. We, who are born in less settled times, are less fortunate.

Contrary to the popular view a diplomatic career is not a smooth progression from post to post. We live in an age when powerful forces of change and upheaval leave us little respite. Embassies are set on fire, ambassadors hijacked, kidnapped, even assassinated; their families harassed, mail tampered with. A diplomat can spend more than half his career languishing in capitals where life is unsafe, where freedom and liberty are unknown, where decency and goodness are smothered, where the intelligentsia has been destroyed, where for the most trivial offences men and women are handed barbaric punishments with no recourse to appeal. To withstand such places for any length of time, immense trained patience, self control and inner strength are required.

Francois-Poncet, the doyen of French diplomats who died recently at the age of ninety, wrote,

> When one forms a judgement on diplomacy and diplomats one should never forget that there are two kinds of posts, very dis-similar. One kind are situated in friendly countries. Everything there is easy. Everyone is anxious to facilitate the task of the ambassador and his staff. Life is agreeable and it is possible to achieve success without great effort. The others are in hostile if not enemy countries. In these conditions everything conspires to make the accomplishment of the Ambassador's mission arduous, bitter, ungrateful. He feels himself surrounded by secrecy and ill-will. He is spied on and watched. He is isolated, the truth is concealed from him. His questions are answered evasively and every one of his days thereby poisoned.

A vast majority of diplomats now spend the better part of their working lives in strange and remote parts of the world – sometimes separated from their families for long periods. They function under trying circumstances and in hostile environments. It is given only to a few to contemplate the skyscrapers of Manhattan, enjoy the theatres of London, the sights and salons of Paris, good food in Rome, good health in Geneva, good music in Vienna and fresh air in Nairobi, to say nothing of the World Cup in Argentina.

Too much is made of the false glamour of diplomatic life.

Let me, therefore, first get rid of this soft-ware of diplomacy. Yes, diplomats do attend a lot of parties – they have to. One cannot absent oneself from a National Day reception, or not be seen at a trade fair, a fete to raise funds, or at a football match where the Head of State is present. The fact is that useful information is gathered at these functions.

The social and representational side of modern diplomacy appears but is not entirely wasteful or unnecessary. A fair amount of serious business is transacted at the U.N. at these social occasions. On the protocol side, change is called for. Oddly enough the Socialist countries and the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa pay far more attention to protocol than is really necessary. I grant that certain proprieties have to be observed, but so much time and money would be saved if we all didn't have to rush to airports to receive and see off individuals and delegations, at unearthly hours. During my tour of duty in London, I must have gone to London airport several hundred times and each trip took at least half a day.

Now the hard-ware. "The most important and elementary requirement of good diplomacy is to know where power lies." This is not always easy since one is dealing with parliaments, presidents, politbureaus, princes, palaces, paranoid dictators and tyrants. Apart from negotiating, the ambassador's basic task is to report on the political, economic and social conditions of the country to which he is accredited, to report conversations, to analyse the policy of the government in the light of its interests and external pressures to which it is subject, its political doctrines, the pre-occupations of its leaders, and the whole complex of the national outlook and characteristics. Foreign policy decisions involve intricate decision-making processes – these processes differ from country to country. Governments are not always 100 per cent unified, objectives are not always clearly defined or definable, information is sometimes inadequate, the end result of a particular line of action is never certain. The human factor intrudes, departmental differences have to be overcome.

An ambassador's duty makes it imperative for him to pursue his country's vital national interests with vigour and

absolute loyalty. This is not done either in a glare of publicity or by media or airport diplomacy, or by peddlers of culture, or delegations from the home country who have neither the time, knowledge or interest to study a problem in depth. This can only be done by a well-staffed embassy, manned by highly professional individuals who are articulate, alert, unobtrusive, well-informed, well-read and not overzealous. Modern diplomacy also involves up-to-date knowledge of economics, trade, commerce, high finance. Quite rightly commercial and trade work is now one of the most important branches of diplomatic life. For too long these vital areas had been given second-class treatment. They have now come into their own.

Among the first actions of a newly independent country is to appoint and receive ambassadors. The widening range of diplomatic activity accounts for the increase of diplomats and if diplomats were so unwanted then their numbers should be decreasing not increasing. You might ask – when leaders or nations meet frequently at the United Nations, the OAU, the OAS, at Non-aligned Conferences, at Commonwealth Heads of meeting, what do High Commissioners and Embassies do? Well, heads of government and foreign Ministers are or should be busy people and if they are to justify their existence then they ought to spend more time at home and less abroad. Secondly, diplomacy is a continuing process, heads of government and foreign ministers cannot be a substitute for an embassy because they cannot be present to deal with the "follow up" action. Agreements reached have to be implemented and for that a high-level representative on the spot is absolutely necessary to ensure continuity. Too frequent meetings at high levels debase the currency, strain the foreign service and achieve little. A country must not fire its biggest gun unless something really vital is involved.

Can ambassadors influence policies? Can they change the course of events? Sometimes. It is on the reports and recommendations of the ambassador that governments base their policies relating to a particular country. They have to rely on the man on the spot. He should not tell headquarters what they want to hear but the truth and nothing but

the truth. Reporting home is a hazardous undertaking, one has to combine candour with caution. In days gone by it was difficult and time-consuming to verify and double check the ambassador's recommendation and information. Today it is very easy and takes no time. Only a foolish man will dare risk giving unsound advice. He will be found out in no time.

D.P. Heatley in his book **Diplomacy and the Study of International Relations**, sums it up well.

> There is no smooth and easy path for the conduct of international policy; nor for its study. The fortunes of nations should not be left to the hazards of the unforeseen. Those who are responsible for guiding relations between states need a vast equipment in knowledge and in aptitude. They must know the resources, the constitution and manner of government, the treaty obligations, the character of the dominant personalities, the national temperament and national objectives, both of their own state and of its connexions — sometimes unruly and suspicious connections — in the family of Nations. They must well consider the relation of means to ends. Here, without any doubt, there is need of eyes for the past, the present and the future — need of the three eyes of prudence, memory, intelligence, providence. By these Fortuna is won. Of all the regions of politics there is no other of which it is so strictly true as of the international that only the most complete knowledge and command available of all the factors should be allowed to count, whether for those who direct or for those in a succeeding age who try to judge them.

Thus there is no room in the diplomatic world for people who do not measure up to the highest standards. Those countries which dump their discarded and rejected politicians, inconvenient Generals, ageing and ailing intellectuals, second-rate journalists, on Embassies do injury to a great calling. I should not say more. The only emotion a diplomat is permitted is controlled indignation.

1979

PART TWO: REVIEWS

1. READING FOR PLEASURE

THERE WAS A TIME, not so long ago, when I bought up to fifty books a year and read most of them. Alas, this is no longer so. The price of books has become prohibitive and I seem to be spending more and more time in pursuit of professional trivia. However, being a compulsive reader who does not consume alcohol or tobacco, I still manage to buy a couple of dozen books and thus lead an exciting life of the mind.

Recently, I came across a striking quotation from W.H. Auden,

> There are certain things in my history that rather embarrass me. I don't withdraw them or deny them – the things I wrote about Fascism and so on. But what embarrasses me is the question 'who benefited'? and the answer is me. The poems did not save one Jew from Auschwitz, or change one thing about the war.
>
> Ever since, I have been very suspicious of the worth of politically committed writing. The only things that work in these situations are truthful reportage, so people know what's going on, or else becoming a politician and joining in the fight.
>
> Dr Johnson said, 'the only end of writing is to enable readers to better enjoy life or better endure it.' I believe this. Art is our chief means of breaking bread with the dead – you can still enjoy reading the Iliad. Yet the political history of Europe would be exactly the same if Dante and Shakespeare and Mozart had never lived.

This helped me to get my intellectual perspective in right focus and I organised my reading accordingly in 1976. Non-fiction predominated – the only novel I read was Ruth Jhabvala's Heat and Dust. It is the work of a first-rate creative artist. The story is complex and intricate but neatly fits like Chinese jugglers' boxes. The economy of words is exemplary, the literary architecture of high distinction.

As a practising diplomat I found Humphrey Trevelyan's **Diplomatic Channels** instructive, lively and full of commonsense. Lord Trevelyan began life in India as an I.C.S. Officer ending his career as British Ambassador to Moscow. Budding diplomats should note that, "in reporting conversations, the Ambassador must be honest and accurate.... In diplomatic practice the mortal sin is to report what the Ambassador thinks his Government would like to hear."

Nirad Chaudhuri's literary affair with the British Empire continues unabated. His **Clive of India** I found on the whole disappointing. At £ 7.50 it recalls to mind the distinction which Marx drew between price and value. Chaudhuri fans will, no doubt, pay the price but as biography it has little value. The introduction is the best part of the book and there are brilliant Chaudhuri passages here and there. Mr Chaudhuri appears more as an advocate and less as a biographer. Not surprisingly time and again he quotes Macaulay. Like Macaulay he has his "heightened way of telling things". He never ceases to be himself. Lord Melbourne is reported to have said of Macaulay, "I wish I was as cocksure of anything as Macaulay is of everything." For Macaulay read Chaudhuri.

Books on Nazi Germany continue to attract readers. Albert Speer's **Inside the Third Reich**, and **Spandau: The Secret Diaries** are totally un-put-downable. Both are long but present an astonishingly clear picture of Germany from 1930 to 1945. Speer is acutely sensitive about his failures and not unfeeling towards others. Since he possesses a first-rate mind, he succeeds in presenting a supremely authentic account of the motivations and ambitions of Hitler and his crew. Speer was the only leading Nazi to plead guilty at Nuremberg. At the age of forty-one he was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment. The diaries written secretly will rank among the memorable books of prison literature. Speer obviously has tremendous inner resources. In both books he offers what is intellectually the most coherent account of Nazi aims and policies. His own love-hate relationship with Hitler he describes in great detail and his portraits of lesser Nazis are exceptionally perceptive. These two books reveal that with one or two exceptions, really third-rate individuals succeeded in getting total control over the lives and minds of a cultured

and disciplined people. The Nazi rhetoric consisted of high and low drivel and yet it mesmerised a whole generation of Germans.

Aneurin Bevan's In Place of Fear was first published a quarter of a century ago. It was recently reprinted. Jennie Lee, to whom it is dedicated, gave me an autographed copy recently. Obviously it dates, but Bevan's courage and outlook have permanent meaning. He was a great Socialist and a great Democrat. His love for India was deep and abiding. Politically perceptive, he foresaw the rise of Italian Communism and on the Labour-Conservative confrontation wrote in 1952, "A nation suspended between alternative courses of action is in a sorry plight. We are not there yet, but there is a danger that we shall get there if recent tendencies are not corrected." Alarmingly prophetic. The theme of the book and Bevan's political humanism are expressed in this sentence; "not even the apparently enlightened principle of the 'greatest good for the greatest number' can excuse indifference to individual suffering...."

The other book I re-read after two decades was Jinnah – Creator of Pakistan by Hector Bolitho. It is a patchy work remarkably barren of useful insights. Mohammed Ali Jinnah deserves a better biographer. Here was a man who had no patience with ideas but was obsessed with one idea and pursued it with unswerving audacity. In purely narrow political terms Jinnah's achievement is quite staggering. He never went to jail, never joined a demonstration, hated mass contact and could hardly be called an orthodox Muslim. Had he died in 1940, he would have been remembered as a successful lawyer and failed politician. But he lived to carve out a country of sixty million people and left the strong imprint of his domineering character on a vast subcontinent. I am neither a follower nor an admirer of his but I do find him a fascinating subject for a serious study. He was incorruptible and free of humbug. When some of his League followers suggested that he should travel third class in the railway, as Gandhiji did, he snapped back, "Do not dictate to me what I should or should not do. It is not your money I am spending and I shall live and act as I choose."

Volume VIII of the Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

edited by S. Gopal covers the years 1937-38. It keeps up the high standard of the earlier volumes. On each page, there is fresh evidence of Nehru's goodness and greatness. It made me feel at once humble and ten feet tall. No serious student of 20th Century Indian History can ignore these volumes. Nehru gives the reader the inside picture of our national struggle and his vision of India and he does so in memorable words and phrases. What a methodical, fair and sensitive individual he was! His correspondence with Jinnah brings out in sharp relief the two outstanding personalities on the Indian scene besides Gandhiji. While Jinnah lowered the level of national political dialogue, Nehru raised it. His forthright intellectual honesty mattered to him supremely. He always emphasised the importance of principles not persons, issues not individuals. S. Gopal's Jawaharlal Nehru A Biography 1889-1947—Vol. I is the most satisfying book to come out on Nehru since his autobiography published thirty years ago. It is a polished, well researched and high-minded book. Dr. Gopal, like so many of us is mesmerised by Nehru's personality but his book is not a subjective or sycophantic narration of Nehru's life. It is a thoughtful study of the Indian Freedom Movement and Nehru's role in it. Gopal writes with ease and facility. His sense of history and historical judgement are of a high order. For the first time Kamla Nehru's relationship with her husband is tackled in an honest and open manner. Gopal writes, "if a successful struggle for self-awareness and self-emancipation is the true test of greatness, then Kamla Nehru ranks amongst the greatest of the Nehrus." However, I cannot help commenting that the author could have been a little more generous to Rajaji. The very large number of footnotes giving important information are a constant irritant. Nevertheless, I can hardly wait for Volume II which is overdue.

The Illustrated Weekly, 1977

2. INDIA DISCOVERED

Scholar Extraordinary by Nirad C. Chaudhuri

NIRAD CHAUDHURI'S LIFE OF Max Müller, the greatest Indologist ever, is a very considerable achievement: well-

researched, well-organised, superbly written, combining deep knowledge with sound judgement. Restraint does not come naturally to Mr Chaudhuri, and it may seem ironical that one who has spent the better part of his adult life learnedly railing at Indologists, the freedom movement, Gandhi and Nehru, should set aside four years in the evening of his life to make a deep study of the man to whom Indian thought and civilisation meant more than the discovery of the sea route to India by Vasco da Gama.

Mr Chaudhuri summons his formidable gifts as writer and scholar to present a multi-dimensional portrait of Max Müller. He successfully evokes the temper and spirit of the time. Max Müller put ancient India and Hindu thought on the map of the world. He never visited the country but spent long years working on the Rig-Veda, perhaps the oldest book in the world. He helped two generations of Indians to rediscover their past and feel proud of it. For many years he lived in the "modest penumbra of scholarship." "I cannot give up Sanskrit, though it holds out no prospect for me," he lamented in his early twenties.

Although Max Müller arrived on the scene at the right time, it was an uphill task for him to enthuse the British people in his project. The writings of James Mill and Macaulay were formidable hurdles; their thesis was that Indians were liars, their literature inferior to that of the West. But Max Müller struggled relentlessly. His early years in England, his poverty and his loneliness are described with feeling and tenderness. In contrast, the situation of the continent was quite different and Max Müller wrote:

> No one could observe the course of modern thought and enquiry on the Continent and especially in Germany, without seeing that India so far from being regarded as the least attractive subject is rather looked upon as the most exciting, as the freshest.... In England, a student of Sanskrit is generally considered a bore.

Mr Chaudhuri's own assessment is similar and historically correct. He observes:

> This was in every way natural, for the German and British involvements in India were wholly of different kinds. The German interest was spontaneous, the product of a combined emotional and intellectual urge created by the Romantic Movement, whereas the British was forced, a by-product of the establishment of the British political power. The majority (of Britons) were indifferent, except when they looked at things Indian as curiosities. Outside a circle of more or less charlatanesque dabblers and peddlers of Indian spirituality, there was no disposition to assign any universal human value to the religion, philosophy, literature and art of the Hindus.

Nonetheless, Max Müller continued his pioneering work and published 49 volumes of the sacred books of the East. He travelled, lectured and became a celebrity; but was badly bruised when he tried unsuccessfully to become Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford. He was the obvious man for the post, but that is not how such matters are decided. It was a severe blow and it took Müller long to recover from it. Thirty years later, he was rewarded and called to the Privy Council. The Prince Consort and Queen Victoria took interest in his activities. For the last three decades of his life he was a world figure. His house at Oxford became a shrine for visiting Indians, to whom he gave much of his time and affection. Modern India owes a deep debt of gratitude to the man who wrote:

> If I were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow — in some parts a very paradise on earth — I should point to India.... And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a transfigural and eternal life — again I should point to India.

A good book on Max Müller was long needed. Few if any

could have written a better one.

New Statesman, 1974

3. CHRONICLES OF THE RAJ

Chronicles of the Raj by Shamsul Islam

CHRONICLES IS DEDICATED, "TO Ayesha, who nearly ate the manuscript". Having read this splendid book I am glad Ayesha (it or she?) looked elsewhere for nutrition. The British have a peculiar gift for reliving their past and are rather good at it. The infection has now spread to the Indian subcontinent. Understandably the Raj produces different echoes in Delhi and London, but new generations on both sides now approach the Indo-British link without bitterness, supercilious arrogance, self-pity or condescending paternalism. This is a healthy development.

Some years ago Jeffrey Meyers in his Fiction and the Colonial Experience, wrote, "Colonial novels consider the cultural conflict that develops when Europe imposes its manners, customs, religious beliefs and moral values on an indigenous way of life. These novels explore important ideas, for the conflict of ideologies has produced the major crises of the twentieth century; and they form a genre that has an important place in the history of the modern British novel." Mr Shamsul Islam's canvas is smaller for he confines himself to British writers who wrote about India. Not long ago he gave us a good book on Kipling. In Chronicles too his starting point is Kipling — I should say he is the "paras patthar", touchstone, for evaluating the work of E.M. Forster, E.J. Thompson, George Orwell and John Masters.

Forster is too well known and his Indian work has been over-exposed by admiring friends and uncritical critics. Mr Islam does not provide any new or blinding insights on Forster, but he is generally sound, understandingly sympathetic and he seems to have read almost all that is written on Forster except perhaps Trilling's study which made Forster better known in America.

How many today recall the name of Edward Thompson? Mr Islam has done well to include this, "relatively unknown figure of minor literary merit." Thompson's books did not

make much impact on British India, but his personality did. Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru were among his friends. He kept the Indian question alive and was constantly needling the powers that be to do something about India's freedom. His novel, An Indian Day deserves a reprint and Mr Islam's essay will, one hopes, revive interest in it. Thompson befriended "dangerous" Indians when it was not fashionable to do so.

Orwell's complex, contradictory and subtle anti-Raj views are well brought out. Actually he was more anti-totalitarian than anti-Raj but was too honest a person to spare the Raj, the Indians or the Burmese. He understood the Indian psyche well. His essay on Mahatma Gandhi opens with a bang, "Saints should always be judged guilty until proved innocent...." At the end Gandhi comes out with flying colours. Once again Mr Islam's conclusions are acute and balanced.

The inclusion of John Masters (the poor man's Kipling) is not clear. He is a post-Raj literary phenomenon (like the late Paul Scott) although he writes about the Raj. Bhowani Junction, brilliantly evokes Anglo-India and the rail people on the eve of independence, but Masters as a creative artist is not out of the top drawer. Reviewing one of his less successful books, The Venus of Konpara, Mr Kingsley Amis wrote in the Observer of 25 September 1960, "Mr John Masters is one of those writers who absorb you totally without setting you think." Not an unfair verdict.

Financial Times, London, November 1979

4. THE VICEROYS OF INDIA

The Viceroys of India by Mark Bence–Jones Constable

THE BRITISH SEEM TO have taken to heart what Kierkgaard wrote, "Life must be lived forward, but can only be understood backwards." The Raj industry is working overtime. Almost every month a book relating to the Indo-British link appears in the U.K. Not all live up to expectations, but many do.

A book on the Viceroys was long overdue. Not all of them were out of the top drawer. Most were unclear about the ultimate destination of British rule in India. It was, till the 20th

Century, a receding destination. Pax Britannica was not just a phrase, but a state of mind. Few few exceptions. Their Excellencies were limited men and not familiar with the temper of the times. Some did much good, others did not leave their footprints on the sands of time.

Mr Mark Bence-Jones is well qualified to attempt such a work on so engaging and fascinating a theme. He spent the early part of his life in undivided India and wrote an authoritative book on Clive in 1974. In this book he makes a brief appearance during the Viceroyalty of Lord Linlithgow and emerges unscathed unlike the Viceroy. Family ties join him to Richard Bourke, sixth Earl of Mayo. Lord Mayo is the author's favourite Viceroy. Mayo is now chiefly remembered for founding Mayo College, Ajmer, where I spent five years, learning all the wrong things in surroundings which can only be described as princely. The servants outnumbered the pupils by a ratio of two to one and the teachers were renowned for tact rather than learning. Mayo's other claim to fame is his being the only Viceroy to have been assassinated. A Pathan murdered him in the Andaman Islands in 1872. Mayo was a good and noble individual and quite forward-looking for his day. Throughout his Viceroyalty he was to be constantly stressing the need for kind and courteous behaviour between the Indians. He would speak of what he called "the abominable practice of striking Indians as a cowardly and detestable crime."

This book has a brief curtain-raising chapter on the Governors-General from Warren Hastings to Dalhousie (the latter was thirty-five years old at the time of his appointment). The real thing begins after 1857-58, when the East India Company was folded up. All the two dozen or so Viceroys get balanced treatment. In some cases the author paints a wholesome portrait, at other times he pronounces a verdict. Canning, Rippon, Mayo, Minto and Irwin get high marks. Lord Dufferin, during whose tenure the Indian National Congress was born, laid the foundations of "the communal strife of the present century....He saw Muslim separatism as an existing fact and took advantage of it to further the growth of some kind of Indian conservative party, which, Liberal though he was, he felt would be more

suited to the circumstances of British India than Congress." The seeds of the policy of Divide and Rule were sowed long before Sir Sayyid Ahmed and Mr Jinnah came on the scene. Curzon, that most superior person, comes out poorly. He had everything going for him, yet he did not live up to his expectations. He lacked Gravitas. The garrulous and menacing Kitchener outwitted him. Curzon was an arrant snob, never on good terms with himself. While one admires his learning, his intellect and his rootedness in the British aristocratic ethos, I find his views on Indians repugnant. He considered us as inferior people. That gives him away.

Lord Irwin (1926-31) was a rather exceptional man, who "understood the springs that gave the Mahatma his astonishing power." Churchill described the Gandhi-Irwin meeting as "the nauseating and humilating spectacle of this one-time Inner Temple lawyer, now seditious fakir, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceroy's palace there to negotiate and parley on equal terms with the representative of the King Emperor." The prose is superb, but the statement is odious and few Indians forgave Churchill for his verbal overkill. Irwin had no hesitation in having "tea with treason". When a member of his staff asked Irwin if he thought Gandhiji tiresome, the reply was, "Some people found our Lord very tiresome."

Wavell, who otherwise was an honest and straightforward man, completely failed to understand the Indian mind, used unbridled and offensive words to describe Indian leaders, and Attlee rightly and unceremoniously removed him. The soldier was no statesman, and it was left to the King's cousin, Mountbatten, to "preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."

At one or two places Mr Bence-Jones takes a wrong turning. He is critical of the treatment meted out to the Indian princes by free India. He is either prejudiced or unaware of the facts. Similarly he has swallowed hook, line and sinker the absurd story about Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel "begging" Mountbatten to run the administration within three months of independence. Nehru and Patel were made of stern stuff. But I should not end on so somber a note. The book also provides amusing diversions like this gem: Lord and Lady

Reading (1921-26) were fond of ball room dancing. On one occasion Lady Reading asked an ADC to tell her the name of the dance tune being played. It was called "I shall remember your kisses when you have forgotten my name" but the young man got all mixed up and replied: "You will remember my kisses, Your Excellency, when I have forgotten your name." History does not record the subsequent fate of the ADC.

The Hindustan Times, 1983

5. END OF AN EMPIRE

Freedom at Midnight by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre

THE RISE OF THE British Empire in India was not an edifying sight. Its decline was. Lord Mountbatten ensured that. The Empire had been three hundred years in the making. The great-grandson of Queen Victoria announced its winding-up within three months of his arrival in India. The diehards and the blimps fretted and fumed but there was no fight left in them and they could hardly pretend that the King's cousin loved the Empire less than they. Prime Minister Attlee's gamble of appointing Lord Mountbatten as Viceroy paid off brilliantly. The man matched the hour.

A detached history of the events leading to the Independence and partition of India in August 1947 has yet to be written. So far we have been offered polemics, propaganda, thinly disguised PR-exercises and ex-post facto justifications by ex-India hands, journalists and authors of popular history. A great historical phenomenon, it inevitably arouses strong passions on both sides. Collins and Lapierre have now joined that distinguished company.

Freedom at Midnight is interesting, informative, gossipy (even my father-in-law's early morning tea in bed ritual is described in some detail), amusing, sympathetic, sad (in a contrived, not deeply felt way), naughty about the princes and prickly about M.A. Jinnah, founder of Pakistan. It held my attention throughout without making me think much—a useful book, but too uneven and patchy to be classified as serious.

Liberties are taken with facts and dates. Indian names are frequently misspelt, common Indian phrases mauled. But it

is high-class journalism, rich in vivid detail. Lord Mountbatten, after some hesitation gave the authors fifteen interviews lasting thirty hours. They have laboured long and hard, meeting and talking to hundreds of people in England and India including surviving conspirators of the Gandhi murder plot.

The tape-recorder intrudes too often. A useful invention, it is none the less an enemy of good old research and scholarship. Tape recorders cannot produce great histories. Instant comment is no substitute for reflection.

I must in fairness add that the book is much more than a hectic accumulation of facts and anecdotes. It covers a vast and complex canvas: the Raj, the Indian Freedom Movement, the life of Mahatma Gandhi ("the gentle prophet of the world's most extraordinary liberation movement"), and of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru—his humanism and nobility of character come through—Sardar Patel and Mr Jinnah, the Hindu-Muslim problem, the princes, the migration of millions of people, the stupendous post-partition problems.

Lord Mountbatten had not only to deal with the situation in India but also mind the home front. Winston Churchill remained unreconciled: "We are handing over India to men of straw." Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Jinnah—some men, some straw. His infamous jibe about "this one time Inner Temple lawyer, now seditious fakir, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceroy's palace, there to negotiate and parley on equal terms with the representative of the King Emperor" had not been forgotten. It did the Mahatma no harm. It did harm Churchill. Lord Mountbatten's reply was to be that "Mahatma Gandhi will go down in history on a par with Christ and Buddha."

The book ends with a moving chapter on Gandhi's assassination. He died as he lived—with the name of God on his lips. His death diminished us as his life enlarged and uplifted us. In the words of Orwell, what a clean smell he left behind.

If Lord Mountbatten is the star of the book then Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru are its heroes. Mr Jinnah gets little sympathy although purely in political terms his achievement was quite fantastic. But then this is not a detached, historical history.

Sunday Times, 1978

6. NOSTALGIC IMAGES

Autobiography of A Princess by James Ivory

THE DIMINISHING TRIBE OF Indian princes continues to hold the attention and interest of the West. Yet a truly substantial and multi-dimensional book on the subject is long overdue. Books and memoirs have not been lacking. Ackerley's Hindoo Holiday, Forster's The Hill of Devi and assorted volumes like John Lord's The Maharajahs, Rosita Forbes' India of the Princess come to mind.

A number of Indian maharajahs and nawabs, to say nothing of a Nizam or a Gaekwar, were characters. In many cases their lives were reprehensible by almost any social standard—foolishly extravagent, grossly ostentatious, self-indulgent, intellectually sterile. However, even when their lives were totally devoid of anything aesthetically enriching, they were never phoney. Endearing many of them may not have been, but fascinating they always were and it is difficult to put down, in staid prose, the life-style of these men, their vanities, spurious enthusiasms, sex wizardry (in not a few cases), genuine feeling for friendship, loyalty and honour.

Mr James Ivory collaborating with Mrs Ruth Jhabvala, has succumbed to the spell of the vanishing Maharajah but the result is not memorable. A well-known film director (Shakespeare Wallah) he is less sure with the pen. His book is a scrappy assortment of interviews, anecdotes, Indian experiences and romantic history. Those interviewed form too narrow a circle. It is a pity he did not meet the Nawab of Pataudi, the late Maharajah of Patiala (until his death in June 1974 India's distinguished Ambassador to Holland) or Dr. Karan Singh, former Maharajah of Kashmir, who has been a member of Mrs. Gandhi's Cabinet since 1967. And to exclude from his galaxy the great Maharajah Bhupinder Singh of Patiala (1891-1938)—Casanova and statesman rolled into one—is quite extraordinary, and to put the magnificent Deeg Palaces into the State of Alwar is like saying that Sandringham is a part of Windsor. Deeg is in Bharatpur.

Still, Mr Ivory has written about some of the more arresting of India's Princes of the twenties and thirties. And this

book has superb photographs by the nineteenth-century photographers Bourne and Shepherd, untouched-up and authentic. The portraits are quite remarkable even though some of the Maharajahs have a flaccid and unexercised air about them. Mr Ivory deserves our congratulations for digging them out from the India Office Library, that fabulous mine of information and material on India.

The texts by Mr Ivory and Miss Yvonne Fitzroy, Lady Reading's companion in the 1920's add little to the well-known tittle-tattle about princely India, and don't even take note of the millions of Indians who lived in the princely States and were having a less jolly time. Nor does the film script of Autobiography of a Princess, by Ruth Jhabvala, add much. Let us hope the film is more satisfying; James Mason must make an admirable Cyril Sahib and Madhur Jaffrey a very elegant princess. In all, this is an attractive coffee-table book. Old India hands in England will read it with reverence and nostalgia. After all, the princes did add colour to the Raj.

Sunday Times, 1975

HALOES AND AURAS

John Kenneth Galbraith Introduces India edited by Front Moraes and Edward Howe; *A Moment in Time* by Apa Pant

THE WORLD IS NOW becoming familiar with the various avatars of Professor John Kenneth Galbraith—the glow that surrounds his person will no doubt become a halo soon. The publishers, aware of his Midas touch, print his name in bolder letters than the subject of the book, India, which he introduces in a six-page essay. He has the talent of transforming even the mundane into the stylish, and if his thesis of the two Indias—the vertical India of the villages and the horizontal India of the upper crust—is not new, it has seldom been summed up more crisply. A miscellany on the formidable subject of India is in constant danger of falling apart. This one holds together, although too much is made of traditional India and some important subjects like industry, agriculture and music have been neglected. Khushwant Singh goes quickly through four thousand years of Indian history a la

K.M. Panikkar; James Cameron evokes India of the partition days in moving prose and with ambivalent feelings, the fate of a number of British liberals who have been smitten by India. Paul Scott provides new insights into the mystique of the Raj. His is a substantial essay, although his claim that the Memsahibs did not play a role in the downfall of the Raj is to me incomprehensible; a re-reading of A Passage to India might help.

The tourist at whom the book is aimed will relish the variety and the flavour; it will not profoundly enlarge his knowledge of India but he will be less ignorant after reading it. He can enjoy himself immensely if he approaches that "marvellous and quite mysterious land" with an open mind and friendly spirit. Bon voyage my friend.

Diplomats are a dime a dozen and their memoirs devalued literary cargo. Their person is no longer sacred and it is now as dangerous to travel as it is to arrive. Their influence and importance have been eroded by the jet plane and the electronics revolution; but that they still have their uses is clear from Apa Pant's A Moment in Time. An ambassador may no longer be in a position to change the course of history but a man of vision and understanding can still play a useful role. By his conduct he can enhance or damage the image of his country. Ambassador Pant served his country well. Shrimati Indira Gandhi writes in her foreword:

> Apa Saheb is not the usual diplomat. His autobiographical narrative mirrors his zest for life and his probing into its mysteries. As a child I sometimes saw people in colours, so I was interested to read of his sensitivity to auras.

A Moment in Time is a strange book to come from a diplomat. It is (mercifully) not a hectic record of endless cocktail parties and dinners, but the testament of a sensitive and deeply religious man whose pursuit of goodness and virtue has not made him self-righteous, and who, finding the human predicament fascinating and baffling, copes with it in a calm and detached manner. He does not curse the darkness and has lighted a candle or two.

Born in a princely Brahmin family in the small Maratha State of Aundh, he was educated at Oxford and on his return

to India in 1937 became Prime Minister of his State. The new democratic constitution, the first of its kind in an Indian State, was blessed by Mahatma Gandhi. How the Aundh experiment prospered and was suddenly extinguished is described with poignancy but no bitterness.

After independence he was invited by Prime Minister Nehru to be India's representative in East Africa with headquarters at Nairobi. Mr Pant was then thirty-six years old. He began life at the High Table and is the only Indian diplomat to remain Head of Mission for twenty-five years. His vitality and zest for life are such that he has felt at home everywhere, in Africa, Sikkim, Indonesia, Norway, Egypt, and in England. Wherever he lived he got the most out of life and made friends for his country. He could discuss Buddhism with the Dalai Lama and Islam with the learned men of Al Azhar university and impress both with his knowledge and open-mindedness. Only a man of his spiritual awakening could have had the extraordinary experiences he did on a return journey from Lhasa.

He provides intimate glimpses of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Presidents Soekarno, Kenyatta and Nasser, and I was interested to read about his long and intimate friendship with Kingsley Martin, who died in Ambassador Pant's house in Cairo in 1969. The dedication of the book I found poetic and moving.

> To the proud and poor people of the Aundh villages, who for the first 30 years of my life toiled, sweated, went without food, to tolerate and provide my horses, elephants, cars, gliders, travels, play and study abroad. My annual expenses at Oxford could have meant one year's food, clothing, shelter, education for the children, for 200 Aundh families. And they all waited for 30 years for me to go back and pay them my debts.

In the following thirty years he did enough to repay these debts several times.

New Statesman, May 1974

8. TILAK AND GOKHALE

Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Return by Stanley Wolpert

MR WOLPERT'S NEW BOOK is, broadly speaking, a history of the pre-Gandhian era of India's freedom movement, and very good history it is. Outside India little if anything is known about the life and work of either Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) or Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915). To most Americans these names probably mean nothing. In India they mean much, especially that of Tilak, whom the British authorities of the day called "the father of Indian unrest". Both these men, in their different ways and spheres, exerted wide and almost decisive influence on the events of their time.

In the early years of the 20th century the Indian National Congress, torn between the revolutionary radicalism of Tilak and the conservative constitutionalism of Gokhale, became paralysed. In 1907 the moderates under Gokhale won a victory, but, as Mr Jawaharlal Nehru says in his Discovery of India, they won "because of organizational control and the then narrow franchise of the Congress. There was no doubt that the vast majority of politically minded people in India favoured Tilak and his group."

Tilak has received considerable attention in print, both in English and in the Indian vernaculars; Gokhale has by comparison been somewhat neglected. Mr Wolpert's is the first comparative study of the lives of the two very remarkable men, who began life as friends and colleagues and ended as political opponents and rivals.

The author went out to India on a Ford Foundation fellowship and spent several months in the city of Poona, where Tilak and Gokhale lived for the greater part of their lives, and where he had access to their private papers and documents. The result of his labours has been rewarding; and we have a well-documented, authentic, authoritative, competent, and, on the whole, well-balanced book. In the earlier half of the volume a certain amount of prejudice in favour of Gokhale is evident, while Tilak's actions and motives come under steady fire. Some of the author's conclusions and judgements on Tilak are questionable and will no

doubt be challenged. However, the balance is restored in the second half of the work, where Tilak receives just and praiseworthy treatment. The middle portion of the book is devoted to Maharashtrian political factionalism and its effect on the national movement. With the dawn of the "twentieth century a gradual 'politicisation' of the Indian elites took place", and the educated classes became totally immersed in political thought and action – with Maharashtra a leading centre of such activity.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was the first political agitator produced by India. He was also the first Indian of stature to arouse a strong national feeling among all Indians by appealing to their sense of the historic past. He proudly announced, "Freedom is my birthright and I shall have it." Trouble with the authorities was inevitable, and Tilak spent long years in prison, both in India and in Burma, to which he was deported in 1908 and not released till 1914. It was in prison that this great patriot and Sanskrit scholar wrote his famous commentary on the Gita. In matters social, economic, and scientific he looked backward rather than forward; he clashed with Gokhale, who was more in tune with the times in these matters and who had the foresight and vision to anticipate the role planning and science would play in the growth and development of India.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale's rise to fame was meteoric; by the time he was thirty-five he was already an elder statesman. He was the commanding Indian in the Viceregal Legislature. A gifted and able debater with a lively and literary style of speaking, an admirer of Burke and J.S. Mill, a master of facts, possessing a profound knowledge of matters fiscal and economic, he was the most effective critic of the Government in the Assembly. But he was basically a moderate and a constitutionalist. His severest criticisms would be couched in statements such as this: "A kind of dwarfing or stunning of the Indian race is going on under the present (British) system. We must live all our life in an atmosphere of inferiority, and the tallest among us must bend in order that exigencies of the system be satisfied...." But there were some who did not bend, and Tilak was foremost among them.

The book ends with a summary comparison of the ideas of

Tilak and Gokhale and the roles they might have played in the national movement that was led by Mahatma Gandhi after 1920. No adequate answer is forthcoming but one thing is certain: both would have had to go along with Gandhi – who had in his early years been much influenced by Gokhale – or they would have been cast aside by the Indian people, for such was Gandhi's magic.

For serious students of modern India Mr Wolpert's book is invaluable. The layman will find it fascinating and gripping. The author's novel Nine Hours to Rama left me bewildered, dissatisfied, and distressed; but Tilak and Gokhale is a major work.

Saturday Review, New York, 1962

9. GANDHI AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Gandhi and Civil Disobedience 1928-1934 by Judith M. Brown

BOOKS ON MAHATMA GANDHI keep being churned up with respectful regularity. Ved Mehta's offering, Mahatma Gandhi and his Apostles has rightly been acclaimed on both sides of the Atlantic. Dr Brown's is a more scholarly work, well researched, well documented it draws upon material not so far available to others. Her passage to India has been very worthwhile. She knew what to look for and where to find it. Her analysis of the events between 1928 and 1934 is sound without being a victim of academic sterility, candid yet balanced. She throws new light on British and Indian dilemmas, the attitudes of leaders on both sides and their anxieties. Till Lord Irwin became Viceroy the British displayed amazing lack of imagination in dealing with a man of Gandhi's calibre and character. Judged by any standards Mahatma Gandhi's impact on mankind was very considerable. Politics was the arena of interests, not morality till Gandhi came on the scene. He took control of the freedom movement and steered it with exceptional skill between high minded idealism and hard-headed realism. The twentieth century has seen no one like him and is unlikely to do so. Nearly thirty years after his death millions round the world spontaneously ask, "what would he have thought? How

would he have us behave?"

Dr Brown gets inside her subject, seldom missing the essential point. She modestly says that her book is, "a contribution to understanding his political career, because his significance for his contemporaries and to some extent for later generations lay in his role as a political leader and innovator..." Since Gandhi was a genius, at times his political style bewildered both his admirers and detractors. When Gandhi took control of Congress in 1920 Indians were lying prostrate. He gave them strength, hope and a purpose. Without the help of T.V., radio, jet planes, the telephone and PR agencies the Mahatma electrified India and made the British sit up and examine the nature of their Indian connection. He made the Empire stick in their throats. He made them feel slightly ashamed of themselves. No wonder some of them complained that the Mahatma was not infrequently taking a spritual blow or two not exactly above the belt.

During the period discussed in the book Gandhi was at the peak of his influence and prestige; his world-wide following running into hundreds of millions. The Dandi Salt march (March-April 1930) described by Dr Brown with warmth and feeling caught the imagination of the world and led to the Gandhi-Irwin pact and eventually to Gandhiji attending the Second Round Table Conference as the sole spokesman of the Indian National Congress. One must agree with Dr Brown that he achieved more outside the Conference finding the endless sessions at Whitehall tiresome. Lord Irwin did his best but even he could not decide whether Gandhi was a saint among politicians or a politician among saints.

New Statesman, 1977

10. THE MEN WHO KILLED GANDHI

The Men Who Killed Gandhi by Manohar Malgaonkar

WITH ONLY A FEW years to go the 20th century is unlikely to produce a second Gandhi. The Mahatma's achievement remains unique. When, after twenty-one years in South Africa, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi returned to India in 1914, his countrymen were lying prostrate. Being the good soul he was, he did not upset the Empire apple-cart

during the war. "Britain's difficulty cannot be made India's opportunity." But by 1920 he was at the helm of the Indian freedom movement. In no time he gave Indians back-bone and pride. Whitehall was winning political battles in India but losing the political war. Gandhi won. India achieved freedom in 1947. Was the great man happy? No. The partition of the country was not a matter for rejoicing. Within five months of Independence Mahatma Gandhi was shot dead by a Hindu fanatic. For Gandhi it was a perfect end. He died on the way to his prayer meeting with God's name on his lips.

Mr Malgaonkar has established an international reputation for himself as a novelist and historian. At least two of his novels, The Princes and A Bend in the Ganges, will be long read and remembered. For most Indians it is not easy to write about Gandhi, or do so objectively and with restraint. Mr Malgaonkar has approached his task with a cool head and a sound heart.

The author was in Delhi throughout the period described in the book, i.e., from Lord Mountbatten's arrival in India in March 1947 to 20 January 1948, the day Gandhi was shot dead by Nathuram Godse. Malgaonkar is entirely successful in capturing the atmosphere, mood and passion of those tragic post-partition days — days of bloodshed and brutality, rage and revenge, madness and murder, horror and hate. Hundreds of thousands of refugees poured into Delhi. They had seen their near and dear ones kidnapped, mutilated, raped and killed. They were in no mood to heed Gandhi's call for turning the other cheek or his imploring them to safeguard the property and lives of Indian Muslims. When nothing stopped the inter-communal strife, the Mahatma undertook a fast unto death in mid-January 1948. Sanity was restored. But three days later on the 20th the killers struck. A crude bomb was placed at the Birla House where Gandhi was staying. The explosion was loud but did not harm Gandhi who remained unruffled. Madanlal the culprit was caught but the other conspirators headed by Godse and Apte all got away, and were not apprehended till after Gandhi's murder on the 30th. Malgaonkar narrates, with controlled indignation, the casual, nay leisurely manner in which the police and other government agencies went about unearthing

the conspiracy. Madanlal had not told all, but enough. Yet the elephantine bureaucratic machine proceeded with unhurried pace till it was too late.

Mr Malgaonkar, being the artist he is, tells us ever so gently, where his admiration and sympathy lie. With clinical clarity he gives the case history of each conspirator. Godse gave himself up after shooting Gandhi and his second in command Apte was arrested later. Both were hanged. The others served sentences of varied duration. The author sums it up for all of us when he writes, "... it is impossible that on that day they could not have been overwhelmed by the sheer enormity of their deed, and made conscious of how great Gandhi was, how puny they themselves were."

Financial Times, February 1979

11. NEHRU AS PRIME MINISTER

Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, Vol II 1947-1956 by Sarvepalli Gopal

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU IS ONE of the most attractive characters in Indian or any other history. He was not simply a famous politician, or a distinguished prime minister; he was a man of letters, of sensibility, of exquisite taste. A man with a warm heart, enlisted in the service of India. Dr Gopal rightly says that, "To a large number Indians he was a measure of all things." He was both hero and legend.

Volume II of this biography covers the first and the most rewarding nine years of Mr Nehru's Prime Ministership. During this decade Nehru called India and Indians to greatness; laid the foundations of a democratic, non-aligned and secular India. It was an exciting and noble undertaking and Dr Gopal does justice to it. He has had access to the private papers of Jawaharlal Nehru for the period after 1947.

Mr Nehru became Prime Minister in his 58th year. All his life he had been the most untiring opponent of the British Indian Government. Once in the seat of authority he learnt his job in no time. His paper work – mountains of it – was never in arrears.

The partition of India in August 1947 posed monumental problems. Those were months of death and destruction on a

vast scale. Millions of refugees had to be rehabilitated, communal passions controlled, and the machinery of government kept going. Side by side the integration of the 500 odd Princely States was being successfully tackled by Sardar Patel, the strong man of the Congress Party, but Kashmir and Hyderabad presented peculiar constitutional problems. India referred Kashmir to the U.N. and regretted doing so ever after. That incredible institution converts the simple into the complex and the complex into the impossible. Kashmir got entangled in a web of international horse trading. The idealist in Nehru was outraged. But a much greater blow was to fall. On 30 January 1948 Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated. For Nehru it was perhaps the saddest day of his life. In one of the great utterances of the 20th Century, Nehru said of his master, "....where he sat became a temple, where he trod was hallowed ground."

Dr Gopal has a fine style. He confesses that Nehru reigned over his youth (over mine too) but he has not allowed his emotions to take precedence over a detached appraisal of the external and internal policies of Mr Nehru. He critically examines the evolution of India's foreign policy (to this day India is the only major country in the world which has not jettisoned any of its basic foreign policy principles) her helpful role in evolving the new Commonwealth; during the Korean War, the Suez crisis, the Indo-China war, and the Hungarian tragedy. Mr Nehru gets high grades on each count. India's relations with the U.S.A., China, Pakistan and the Soviet Union are presented with subtle and critical understanding.

The chapters on Nehru's visits to the U.S.A., China and the Soviet Union make absorbing reading. On Krishna Menon, Nehru's foreign policy trouble-shooter, Dr Gopal is devastating. Lord Mountbatten too is pulled down a peg or two from his pedestal.

Nehru's cordial relations with Churchill will come as a surprise to many in view of Churchill's Indian record. Both men were big enough to forget and forgive. Churchill admired and valued Nehru as a colleague in the Commonwealth. One important event is not mentioned — Nehru's meeting with Shaw in 1949. Nehru had taken the initiative and Shaw

responded warmly.

While Nehru was earning world-wide acclaim, the home front was not neglected. Nehru's administrative and executive record during the 1947-56 decade was astonishingly successful. His, at times, disturbing vitality was literally moving mountains of historical debris, accumulated over centuries. The traditional was not discarded but creatively dove-tailed to the modern. Scientific institutions were established, atomic energy harnessed to peaceful purposes, India was made plan-conscious, mighty dams were constructed, steel plants started. The map of India was recast on linguistic lines. The historic Hindu Code Bill, which for the first time gave Hindu women a better deal was passed.

On the debit side Dr Gopal points out the absence of a vigorous campaign for family planning. Also Nehru's inability to come to a working relationship with the Congress Socialists led by J.P. Narayan. The author's put-down of Nehru's special Assistant M.O. Mathai has a Johnsonian ring. He rightly dismisses him as an "illiterate upstart," as he does the "mouldering mediocrities who claimed to be his [Nehru's] colleagues."

Gopal's work on Nehru's life, when completed – the third and final volume is due soon – will be a major achievement of sustained excellence, both in style and substance, of brilliant historical insights of a cultivated mind and sound judgement. Jawaharlal Nehru deserved the very best biographer; he has got one.

Financial Times, 1980

12. NEHRU: THE FIRST SIXTY YEARS

Nehru: The First Sixty Years edited by Dorothy Norman

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU WAS SO prominent a figure and played such a significant part in shaping contemporary history that inevitably there will be many full-scale biographies of him written by historians and by his friends and countrymen and others, for he meant so much to so many people in so many parts of the world. But it is doubtful if there will be another compilation like Dorothy Norman's Nehru: The First Sixty Years.

It is indeed, a gripping account of one of the noblest and greatest lives of our times. These two volumes trace in Mr Nehru's own words, the development of his political thought and the background against which it was evolved. They include significant passages from his writings, speeches, statements before British Indian Courts, press conferences, extracts from his letters and other documents, and they take us to the founding of the Republic of India on 26 January, 1950.

Mrs Norman, who knew Nehru and who has written knowledgeably about India, remains wonderfully inconspicuous and has done an admirable job as editor. She has arranged the passages in chronological order, provided short but pertinent and informative commentaries which give necessary background information and link the extracts together. She divides the two volumes in 12 parts:

"Part I, Youth – Early Political development (to 1929)" and so on to, "Part XII, 1949-50: To the Founding of the Republic of India – January 26, 1950." In between we have the unique story of India's freedom struggle under the magical leadership of Mahatma Gandhi seen through the eyes of his most loyal, devoted and beloved lieutenant, Nehru. Perhaps for the first time we have a fully documented and authentic corpus of Mr Nehru's writings and speeches up to 1950 in one collection, and for this Mrs Norman has earned our gratitude and thanks. Serious students of modern India and world history will find the volumes invaluable.

Jawaharlal Nehru's was not an unexamined life. He was his own most intelligent and unsparing critic. He pondered seriously and deeply over problems that concerned India in particular and the world in general. Westerners do not always remember that he spent nearly ten years in British Indian jails, and there he read widely and put down his reflections and thoughts in his several books. Mrs Norman has quoted extensively from these books, and from each page springs Nehru's burning integrity, his political uprightness, his compassion, his humanism, his sense of justice and fair-play, his wit, his scientific and modern outlook, his distaste and hatred for poverty and cruelty, his abhorrence of Fascism, Nazism and Colonialism and for the underhand methods of

all totalitarian regimes. While Mahatma Gandhi inspired and shook the Indian masses and turned the Indian National Congress from a middle-class organisation into a mass movement, Nehru through his writings and much more through his speeches, educated the Indian people as no one had ever done before. By his disarming candour and personal example he raised the level of national and international dialogue and proved to us that private decencies can be transmitted to public affairs. The Congress Party's resolutions at its annual gatherings relating to international affairs, economic planning, socialism, secularism, industrialisation, land reform, trade unionism, democracy, etc. are mainly the work of his pen. Since 1927 he was the chief and often the lone spokesman of the Indian National Congress on foreign affairs. He made Indians aware of the world and the world aware of India.

It was he and he alone who laid the foundation of a secular, democratic, socialist India. Often he was in disagreement with his closest colleagues and collaborators. At times, the political gulf between him and Mahatma Gandhi seemed almost unbridgeable but never did he falter in his personal loyalty and devotion to Mahatma Gandhi. Nehru knew that only Gandhi could deliver the political goods in India. The Mahatma, though not always approving of some of Nehru's progressive and advanced views, in his turn never wavered in his loyalty and devotion to him.

As early as 1929 Gandhi said of Nehru, "He is pure as crystal, he is truthful beyond suspicion. He is a knight sans peur sans reproche. The nation is safe in his hands." Some of the most moving passages in Mrs Norman's book are to be found in the exchange of letters between Gandhi and Nehru. In 1922 Nehru was in his thirty-third year and was sentenced to jail for the second time. He ended his statement at his trial on 17 May with the following words:

> I marvel at my good fortune. To serve India in the battle of freedom is honour enough. To serve under a leader like Mahatma Gandhi is doubly fortunate. But to suffer for the dear country: what greater good fortune could befall an Indian unless it be death for the cause or the full realiza-

tion of our glorious dream.

New York Times Book Review, 1965

13. AN AREA OF DARKNESS

An Area of Darkness by V.S. Naipaul

I HAD LOOKED FORWARD to Mr Naipaul's book on India, having followed his work over the years with interest and increasing admiration. The Middle Passage enhanced my knowledge and understanding of the Caribbean. Three years ago in Trinidad I acquired a copy of his novel, A House for Mr Biswas, a book rightly acclaimed "a Caribbean masterpiece". However just as A House for Mr Biswas was a triumph, An Area of Darkness is a disaster and does little credit to Mr Naipaul.

In the late 1920s, Miss Katherine Mayo's notorious book, Mother India, was published. Not many people now remember or mention it, and it would have been forgotten but for Mahatma Gandhi's famous description of it as "a Drain Inspector's report". During the Second World War we had Mr Beverly Nichols's Verdict on India. A few years back Mr Arthur Koestler pronounced himself on India in The Lotus and the Robot. Now we have Mr V.S. Naipaul, either a poor man's Koestler or a rich woman's Mayo. His book, An Area of Darkness, belongs to this infamous group. All of them give a peculiarly false and distorted picture of the very land and people they purport to describe.

Mr Naipaul was born of Hindu parents in Trinidad where his grandfather had migrated from India in the early years of 20th century. He grew up in Trinidad and before he was twenty left for England where he has lived ever since, achieving acclaim and distinction both as critic and novelist.

He visited India for the first time in 1962 and the present book carries his impressions of the one year he spent in India. It is Mr Naipaul's unique achievement to have been twelve months in the country without meeting a single worthwhile human being. He found almost everything in India distasteful; the people, their habits and their manners, the cities, villages, bureaucracy, railways, army, even the Taj Mahal is

not spared. "The Taj Mahal is exquisite. Transported slab by slab to the United States and re-erected, it might be wholly admirable. But in India it is a building wastefully without a function; it is only a despot's monument to a woman, not of India, who bore a child every year for fifteen years." What is this supposed to mean? It is at once fine prose and rough nonsense.

Mr Naipaul has no time for Hinduism, Indian philosophy, Indian history, or the great literature of ancient India. The only book that seems to have interested him is the Kama Sutra. The Indians he met are caricatures. Half way through the book I began to realise that perhaps its most arresting caricature is V.S. Naipaul himself.

What an extraordinary sanitation complex, or should I call it municipal righteousness, he displays. "Indians defecate everywhere [fancy 450 million defecating] on the beaches, on the hills...." (The Churchillian echo is unmistakeable). Mahatma Gandhi is dismissed in a few words as a failure. Mr Naipaul makes no effort to understand him or to take note of the Mahatma's unique achievement.

The book begins with an hysterical account of almost two days spent chasing two bottles of liquor which Mr Naipaul had to surrender at the Bombay Customs on arrival in India. As a teetotaller I am unable to appreciate such enthusiasm for spirits. No one condones the bureaucratic delays and red tape that are often encountered in India and all of us share some of his outrage and indictment of certain social and bureaucratic phenomena, not unknown elsewhere. But thoughtful people have been aware of these shortcomings before Mr Naipaul wrote about them. Raving and ranting has not helped and Mr Naipaul raves and rants too much.

This is a melancholy performance by a gifted and talented man. His excellent prose is matched only by a recklessness of sweeping generalizations. From a man who is capable of writing A House for Mr Biswas, the displays of temper and his atrocious behaviour in his ancestral village in Uttar Pradesh in North India are beyond comprehension. Only a psychiatrist could explain them.

He is honest enough to say towards the end of the book that his Indian journey "was a journey that ought not to have

been made. It had broken my life into two." If the journey was a mistake, surely it is a bigger mistake to have written such a mistaken book about it. I should have thought that Mr Naipaul would not hazard another one but he is reported to have recently said to Mr Dom Moraes, an Indian poet, also living in England, that "I should like to try and live in India for a while." It surprised me as it surprised Mr Moraes that Mr Naipaul should want to return to a place which he had found so disenchanting.

If and when Mr Naipaul returns he can rest assured that he will receive abundant hospitality and kindness wherever he goes in India, for, we do as a people and as a nation, for good or for worse, have infinite capacity to tolerate disagreeable visitors and aggressive intellectuals. But before he ventures writing another book on India he will do well to ponder over these words of Cromwell – who told the Rump Parliament in the 17th century – "I beseech you in the bowels of Christ. bethink yourself that you may be wrong."

New York Times Book Review, 1965

14. THE WOUNDED CIVILIZATION

India: A Wounded Civilization by V.S. Naipaul

WE INDIANS ARE A long-suffering people. Having survived Katherine Mayo's Mother India, Beverly Nicholas' Verdict on India, Koestler's The Lotus and the Robot, and Mr Naipaul's hysterical An Area of Darkness (1964), we are not likely to be knocked out by his India: A Wounded Civilization. Why should so gifted and creative a writer waste his talent writing about a country which causes him so much anguish and which he is incapable of understanding?

India: A Wounded Civilization is a very vulnerable book, totally lacking fairness or charity. Mr Naipaul finds every aspect of Indian life distasteful. So negative an appraisal must cause discerning people to question the soundness of his judgement. He takes a swipe at India's "borrowed institutions", says "Cruelty is life itself", that Gandhi's teachings have no "universal application" and makes much of "India's second-rateness". R.K. Narayan (he will hardly thank Mr Naipaul for quoting him) and Vijay Tendulkar are summoned

to prove that there is no answer to be found in Hinduism for the human predicament. Mr Naipaul has not avoided the perils of excessive introspection. He over-reacts. Gandhi's autobiography falls short of Mr Naipaul's standards and the Mahatma is taken to task for failing to describe buildings and streets in London. Vinoba Bhave does not escape unscathed, nor Jayaprakash Narayan or Prime Minister Desai. There is plenty of high-class name calling. The Jana Sangh and Shiv Sena too are given a dressing down. Even Indian architecture is not spared.

One is entitled to ask, "What in the name of heaven, is the object of this exercise?" India is an open society, her splendour and squalor, her triumphs (the recent elections) and her tragedies (inability to control population) are visible. Any intelligent person can pose all the questions posed by Mr Naipaul who has no solutions to offer. This makes his brilliantly written book valueless. Some of India's institutions are borrowed, so is Mr Naipaul's superior intellectual baggage. His views on India have no higher validity than mine on nuclear physics. Three hundred years from now mankind will still be bowing before Gandhi's achievement. Mr Naipaul's book is less likely to be around in the year 2277.

Naipaul is an outstanding creative writer but he should stop looking for his lost Hindu soul, leaving India alone or better still leave it to Nirad Chaudhuri who treats the subject more convincingly because he knows India and Hinduism from inside.

One would have hoped that after a gap of thirteen years Mr Naipaul would have something more mature, calm and original to offer, some new blinding insights into Hinduism and Indian thought. He disappoints. His dazzling phrases shoot into the area of darkness, glow a moment or two, then come crashing down to the ground and are reduced to ash and dust. His book is littered with the debris of his fastidious and petulant outpourings.

He should let his passionate fluency serve his needs as a novelist, his imaginative vitality to expand and divert his high intellect to some other purpose. Although he has taken a wrong turning, it is perhaps not too late for him to change course. He has approached India with his head not with his

heart. His heart to quote E.M. Forster is "undeveloped" and that will never do for Mother India.

Financial Times, 1978

15. KOHLI'S MARITIME VISION

Sea Power and the Indian Ocean by S.N. Kohli

BY THE TIME I reached page 3 of Admiral Kohli's book, I realised that to do justice to his labours I should first read at least two if not all three books he mentions. So I read K.M. Panikkar's India and the Indian Ocean, and that classic, The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660-1783 by Alfred Thayer Mahan. Consequently I am better educated and thank the former Naval Chief for doing me this unintended good turn.

Admiral Kohli served the nation well and with distinction. In his retirement he has expanded his mental energy, an attribute which is in short supply nowadays, to writing a useful book. It is well written, well organised and a serious offering at the sacred altar of National Defence. In every area of the subject he discourses with knowledge and insight.

We were once a powerful maritime country. The whole of Indo-China and Indonesia carry to this day the marks of our maritime extension in the early centuries of the Christian era. Yet for nearly a thousand years in the recent past we literally turned our backs to the sea. For this we paid a very heavy price indeed. Sardar Panikkar writing about the attitude of the Moghuls to the sea says, "on the whole, the Moghul view of the sea was that of Kalif Omar who when told by his General, at the time of the conquest of Egypt, that, 'the sea was a huge beast which silly folk ride like the worms on logs,' ordered that no Mussalman should risk his life on such an unruly element without his express orders. The result was that during the two hundred years of Moghul greatness, not only was the Indian sea entirely under alien control but simultaneously with the development of Moghul power, the foundation was being laid by others for a more complete subjugation of India, than any land power at any time could have conceived. The latter-day Hindus completely ignoring their maritime glories went even further than Kalif Omar.

The Brahmins forbade the crossing of the seas. Those that disobeyed were ex-communicated. Only ninety years ago Gandhiji and Pandit Moti Lal Nehru faced this hurdle. It is to their eternal glory that they kicked it aside.

We have a 5000 mile long coast line and yet this is the second worthwhile book on a vital subject to appear in twenty-five years. Admiral Kohli has dealt with the subject with thoroughness and care. He does not possess the historical sweep of Mahan or the refreshing and breezy scholarship of Panikkar, but he is sound, clear, accurate and readable even when he is being instructive and tautological. He draws our attention forcefully to the crucial importance of the Indian Ocean being declared a zone of peace as laid down in the Lusaka declaration (1970) and the U.N. resolution sponsored by Ceylon in 1972. This resolution was supported by ninety-five countries but twenty-three – including the USA, UK, USSR and France – abstained. So much for the peaceful protestations of the mighty.

Admiral Kohli is keenly aware of the limited naval muscle of the littoral states and wisely recommends that they "relentlessly continue their efforts to build up world opinion against the obduracy of the big powers." He is severely critical of the base at Diego Garcia, "No sophistry, no blandishment, no clever attempts to explain away these bases can restore the confidence of the nations of the Indian Ocean littoral." His chapter on the geopolitical importance of the Indian Ocean is good value.

The Indian ocean is rich in oil, minerals, sea food. Little is being tapped by us. We are still at the mercy of foreign shipping and firms. Here are a few revealing figures given by Admiral Kohli: only 23 per cent of our foreign trade is carried in Indian vessels and we "pay a phenomenal annual bill to foreign shippers for the balance." PL 480–"aid" carried the stipulation that 50 per cent of the cargo was to be lifted by U.S. merchant ships at special freight rates. Another arresting fact is brought to light – the Navy's share of the defence budget has actually dropped since 1960-61. It is to be seen if his suggestion for a "Third Fleet" to supplement the existing Western and Eastern Fleets will find favour.

In the meanwhile I commend S.N. Kohli's book and his maritime vision.

16. UNMADE JOURNEY

Unmade Journey by Ian Stephens

THE CURRENT BRITISH DISEASE is to relive the past. The Indian subcontinent provides the necessary raw material. Both demand and supply appear inexhaustible. Britain sent out an amazingly varied lot of people to India: dedicated imperialists, insufferable Blimps, over-zealous missionaries, brilliant and resourceful administrators, eccentric journalists, stuffy judges, narrow-minded educationists, snobs from Eton and Oxbridge with well-developed bodies and "undeveloped hearts", genuine friends of India like E.M. Forster, C.F. Andrews, Verrier Elwin, Fenner Brockway, Kingsley Martin and others.

Mr Stephens has written a number of books on Pakistan and made a reputation for himself as a devoted friend and admirer of that country and its people. Why this should preclude understanding and appreciation of post-1947 India is both incomprehensible and regrettable. The attempt should be to break down barriers not strengthen existing ones.

Unmade Journey is an autobiography of sorts. Its range is wide and its chronology confusing. The author is candid enough to concede that it lacks "firm internal structure". It does not lack [illegible]larity or prolixity. His flinty integrity one admires but I had problems with his political and literary judgements. Mr Stephens spent twenty-one years in India from 1930 to1951. He resigned the editorship of the Calcutta Statesman over India's attitude to the Kashmir question. Thereafter he was in residence at King's College, Cambridge and later spent some years in Pakistan. He writes with great feeling and warmth about those years. He now lives in retirement in Cambridge rather taken up by his Chinese (strictly non-Peking) connection of which he has a lot to say.

Mr Stephens has definite views about men and matters but is unable to enlarge the significance of events through which he lived. His pet aversions are the Bloomsburyites, Lord Mountbatten, Pandit Nehru and to a lesser extent Mahatma Gandhi. Mountbatten is taken to task for ending his 1968 Nehru Memorial Lecture on 15 August 1947. Mr Stephens suggests that the noble Lord did so to avoid discussing Kashmir. This is unjust and unworthy. Stephens himself

avoids an indepth analysis of what took place in the Indian subcontinent in the later half of 1971. An honest and objective analysis of those events would have entailed criticism of his beloved Pakistan.

In his chapter on E.M. Forster, he places A Passage to India in the same category as Christine Westen's Indigo and Phillip Woodruff's Call the Next Witness. To put Forster's classic in the same league is to place personal prejudice above objectivity. He is generous to Han Suyin and I share his enthusiasm for John Master's Bhowani Junction.

I read every page of Unmade Journey but never really felt at ease. It is interesting, at times lively, vivid and controversial but at £7.50 it could be a financial disaster without being a literary success. I hope I am wrong. I fear I might be right.

17. SIR GEORGE SCHUSTER

Private Work and Public Causes: A Personal Record 1881-1978 by Sir George Schuster.

LONGEVITY, COMBINED WITH GOOD works, bestows a very special kind of distinction. Sir George Schuster is now in his ninety-ninth year. He was born within a week of Disraeli's death. He is still active, still curious, still interested. Throughout his life he has batted with a straight bat, winning the confidence and respect of all, including those who did not share his outlook and views – Jawaharlal Nehru's letter to him from Dehra Dun Jail in 1941 is a fine example of private decencies being transmitted to public affairs.

After a conventional school and university education in late Victorian England, Sir George was called to the Bar and then to the City. His German name was no help and in 1914 he had to abandon a promising political career. He served with the Oxfordshire Yeomanry in the War and in 1919 he found himself at Murmansk trying to help the White Russians with whom he soon grew disillusioned. From late 1919 to 1922 he worked with the Finance Committee of the League of Nations and flirted with the Labour Party and got to know and like Ramsay MacDonald.

The next twelve years he spent in Africa (Sudan) and India. Coming as I do from India and living as I did for sometime, in Africa, I found his African and Indian chapters fascinating

and instructive. As a member of the Hilton Young Commission (1928), Sir George spent several months in Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika, Nyasaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia. His outlook on Colonial matters half a century ago was refreshingly broad-minded. He successfully resisted Leo Amery's plan to create a white dominion in East Africa. In Nairobi he clashed with Sir Edward Grigg, the Governor of Kenya and he found the white settlers a poor lot, "men of no stability, little capital or education and Croydon stockbroker's politics...." A fair verdict. One has only to look at Rhodesia today to wake up with the staggering realisation that a majority of the whites there have learnt nothing from history and continue to misjudge the temper of the times.

Sir George was from 1928 to 1934 Finance Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council at Simla and New Delhi — in other words, Chancellor of the Exchequer. His dual with Whitehall when England went off the gold standard and did so without informing Delhi throws interesting light on the contradictions inherent in a colonial system. The Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, backed him. Only a direct appeal from the British Cabinet stopped Schuster and the entire Executive Council from resigning. He got on well with the Nehrus — father and son — and had friendly contacts with Mahatma Gandhi. But Sir George's most durable monument is the Reserve Bank of India which he helped establish in 1934. He revisited India in 1953 and was affectionately and warmly received by all.

His tenure as M.P. from Walsall (1938-45) was not a memorable one, except that he was not smitten by Churchill and thought rather highly of Chamberlain — a lot of people did at the time. Temperamentally he was too independent to be a good party man and perhaps too honest to be a successful politician.

After the war he took up, "a variety of tasks" among which his work with the United World College of the Atlantic gave him great happiness and satisfaction, as it did all others who came in contact with him there.

His book has an old-world integrity and no-nonsense flavour about it and while it is not literature, parts of it are a valuable contribution to the history of the Raj. Great public

servants like him to some extent redeemed an otherwise indefensible institution.

18. ENGLISH-SPEAKING EMPIRES

Revolutionary Empire: The Rise of the English Speaking Empires from the Fifteenth Century to the 1780s by Angus Calder

A BOOK THAT WEIGHS nearly two pounds ought to have such a long title. I congratulate Dr Calder for including the name of that distinguished Kenyan novelist, Ngugi Wa Thiang'o in his joint dedication. Ngugi's novels, Weep Not, Child and Petals of Blood put him among the front rank of African writers.

Now, to Dr Angus Calder's monumental book. It is a tour de force, a tremendous feat of historical research, a remarkable example of high professional skill but above all it combines readability with (on the whole) sound judgement. Open the book where you will and you will learn something new. Something exciting, something that will attract your attention and grip your mind. It has flaws; it is prolix, the trivia could have been jettisoned but in the final analysis it is a serious work and not a stereotype book. Mercifully it is not Anglocentric in the manner in which Winston Churchill's History of the English Speaking People was.

The rise of the first English-speaking empires was an astonishing saga of savage daring, devilry, deceit, intrigue. Also of adventure, ambition, the good fortune of some and ill-fortune of many – especially the American Indians who were mercilessly dispossessed and the black Africans who were sold and kept as slaves. Dr Calder is not sentimental about either (he abhors both the senseless scalp hunting of American Indians and the slave traders) but makes it quite clear that Red Indian heads and black hands were needed to establish these empires and slave trade was responsible for giving British a head start in revolutionising industry – no slavery, no industrial revolution, no head hunting, no thirteen colonies. These are brutal but inescapable conclusions and Dr Calder deals with them as sensibly as it is possible for an objective historian to do so, on subjects which arouse – rightly so – anger and emotion in the non-white world.

Dr Calder begins his tale (no disrespect meant) from the 15th Century and takes us through the following centuries with unhurried pace and serenity. I found the extremely detailed accounts of the goings and comings in Ireland and Scotland, tedious and exhausting. I have no doubt others would have found the India portions tautological and unnecessary – I found them riveting. But of India, more in a moment.

Dr Calder is at his masterly best when writing of the Pilgrim Fathers (how well do I remember a debate in the Cambridge Union in the early 1950s on, "This House believes that it would have been better if Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers instead of them landing on it"), the evolution, growth, establishment and revolt of the thirteen New England colonies. He is equally well-informed and revealing on the Caribbean trade, on the voyages of Drake and Raleigh, the governments of Walpole and the elder Pitt. His portraits of Cook and Clive, Wolfe and Washington and the Indian princes are brilliant.

I was inevitably, most interested in his handling of the Indian material (as the sun was setting on the Empire in the West in America it was rising in the East in India). Neither Macaulay nor Nirad C. Chaudhuri nor T.G.P. Spear have drawn and delineated Lord Clive as deftly and elegantly as Calder. Errors do creep in, one glaring one is about Babar's conquest of India – 1526, not 1517 as Dr Calder says. But when the canvas is so vast, the research material available so varied and the interpretations so numerous, minor errors are inevitable, so is selective use of material. The Boston Tea Party, if I remember right gets less space than the Black Hole of Calcutta and Wolfe is made too much of.

At times the author gets carried away by the romanticism of empire-building (it is not easy to resist) but on the whole his feet are firmly planted on the ground and his head is not lost in vaporous and fog-making rhetoric which is the chief bane of Churchill's four volumes.

Dr Calder has promised us a second volume. I have a prayer to offer, may it be less lengthy and may it be as lively as Jan Morris' trilogy.

The Financial Times, London, 1981

19. A STAR IN THE EAST

Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening by Mary Lutyens

THIS IS THE STORY of the mess Jiddu Krishnamurti got into and how, in the memorable year 1929, he got out of it with a grand gesture. It is a bizarre episode in the spiritual evolution of mankind. At eighty Krishnamurti is at once the doyen and the Mr Clean of Gurudom. To have retained an international reputation for wisdom for fifty years in this implacable age is no mean achievement. Inevitably, a Krishnamurti cult has sprung up in spite of Krishnamurti's wishes. He obviously has the gift of inspiring devotion.

The Indians give much time to their gurus and holy men. People in the West give them their attention. Lady Emily Lutyens, wife of the builder of imperial Delhi, and her daughter Mary were attracted to theosophy, and that understandably drew them to Krishnamurti. They convinced themselves that such awakening as had befallen them they owed to Mrs Annie Besant, Krishnamurti – and Mrs Besant's clairvoyant colleague, C.W. Leadbeater, who bore a striking resemblance to Rasputin in his appearance as well as in his power; in this case over Mrs Besant. Mary Lutyens is discreetly generous in her final estimate of him and still remembers his charm and magnetism while finding him an enigma.

Of the other deities of the Theosophical Society and the Order of the Star in the East of which Krishnamurti was made Head only B. Shiva Rao can claim to come out of the top drawer. This book was originally to have been written by him, but failing eye-sight prevented his completing it; he has given all the necessary material and the papers to Mary Lutyens.

Her labour invites our admiration, but not the result. Writing such a book cannot be easy; reading this one was not. On page after page non-events in the adolescent life of Jiddu Krishnamurti and his brother Nitya are painstakingly recorded, and their boring letters extensively quoted. (Emily Lutyens was at once 'mother' and 'disciple'.) Aimless journeys from Madras to London, Paris, Holland, Switzerland, Sicily, California, Australia never seem to end, seldom producing the desired results. Mrs Besant kept very good second-rate

company, some of whom had first-rate bank balances.

But there are lively passages. The "discovery" of Krishnamurti, an appeal to the Privy Council, doomed efforts to get the boys into Oxbridge, Jiddu's inability to pass the London Matriculation examination (whatever become on his clairvoyance?) do relieve the monotony. As the years go by his looks get better all the time. His prose style first improves, then obfuscation takes over. In 1922, at 27, he has an extraordinary spiritual experience in California. It prepares him for the role of the Messiah for which he had been marked by Mrs Besant and Leadbeater. Baron Von Pallandt had given him five thousand acres and the Castle Eerde in Holland. As Head of the Order of the Star Krishnamurti was the sole beneficiary of this gift and other properties in Europe and America. But other influences were obviously whispering to Krishnamurti. His brother's death had a profound effect on him and was perhaps the turning point in his life. By 1929, he had had enough. While his personal love for Mrs Besant remained unaltered, he was unwilling to go along with her scheme of turning him into a Messiah.

Deep down an upright and honest man, he had the moral courage on 2 August 1929 to dissolve the Order, and jettisoned most of the spiritual baggage that had been such an encumbrance. The speech in which he did so is among his act alone Krishnamurti will be remembered. He also served his association with the Theosophical Society. Many of his admirers felt let down, but Krishnamurti had made his choice. Ever since he has continued to preach, teach, seek, travel, influence people and contemplate the human predicament. No selling instant Nirvana from this quarter.

One shining merit of this book should be highlighted — no attempt is made by Mary Lutyens to tidy up the past.

Sunday Times, London, 1974

20. HINDUISM

Hinduism by Nirad C. Chaudhuri

MR NIRAD CHAUDHURI IS incapable of writing anyth-

ing which does not stimulate thought or stir the imagination. He is the great Indian iconoclast who enthusiastically takes on the most sacred cows of the Hindus. His book on Hinduism has been awaited with high expectation. Laymen like me will find it invaluable. The scholar might have some reservations. A vast and intricate subject has been handled with care and elan. At eighty-two Mr Chaudhuri has not lost any of his intellectual vigour or scholastic flair. In his preface he says that, "No one can deal with India, or understand the social and cultural life of the people of the country, without a knowledge of Hinduism..." No quarrel with that or with this brilliant observation, "Thus it happens that, in order to become a coherent and logical system, Hinduism has not shed any of its features in the course of its evolution. For this reason Current Hinduism may also be seen as a museum of its entire history." He can be exquisitely subtle in his perception.

Mr Chaudhuri comes down hard on "Hinduizing Occidentals", who look for things which are not there in Hinduism. No Hindu heretics exist because Hinduism has no fixed doctrine or established church and clergy. They are surprised that anything so spongy could survive so long, "without support from any kind of organisation secular or spiritual." The spiritual stamina of the five hundred million Hindus is quite remarkable.

Yet something is missing from his book. The rigorous intellectual coherence is there. So is the scholastic resourcefulness but still it remains a work of great competence rather than of inspiration. Additionally, no study of Hinduism is complete without reference to Buddhism. Mr Chaudhuri neglects the Buddha as he does the civilisations of Harappa and Mohanjodaro. Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj and Sri Aurobindo are not considered worthy of mention. Nor is Radhakrishnan's **Hindu View of Life**. Mr Chaudhuri approvingly quotes Abbe J.A. Dubois at some length. The Abbe was a shrewd observer, a gifted and painstaking chronicler and his book, **Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies** is both entertaining and useful, but he is not in the same class as Max Müller, Radhakrishnan or R.C. Zaener.

Mr Chaudhuri is good on the sects and cults of the Hindus;

amazingly candid and engagingly lively on Tantric erotica. He is less satisfying on Hindu spirituality and mysticism. The promptings that mystics experience are not to be lightly set aside. Charlatans there always will be but the genuine mystic is quite a figure. The Greek influence on Hinduism and Hindu culture is overplayed and Mr Chaudhuri is on unsure ground when he asserts that the ancient Persians were "protected against the temple cult by their exclusive monotheism" (p. 94). One has only to look up the Encyclopaedia Britannica to discover that the Persians were not "exclusive monotheists". The claim that worship of light and fire, "the two most basic features of the Hindu religious consciousness could not have originated in India, but must have come from some cold region" is open to reasonable doubt. Mr Chaudhuri goes further and declares that in India, "light becomes glare by eight o'clock in the morning." It does not, not in the winter months in north India. However, these are minor flaws in a remarkable and valuable work.

What impact will this beautifully written, serious book on so important a subject make in India. Not much, I fear, because in India, that is Bharat, it will fall into that great void where the only echo is oum-boum. The effort was no doubt worth it. As the Gita has it,

> Thou art entitled to the work,
> but never to its fruits.

Financial Times, 1979

21. THE MYTHS OF HINDUISM

Hinduism: Its Mythology, Folklore and Development, 1500-B.C. - A.D.-1500 by Margaret and James Stutley.

THIS IS AN ABSORBING and stimulating book. Twenty years of hard labour have gone into its compilation. Students of the World's oldest religion will find it invaluable. The German philosopher, Count Herman Keyserling in his Travel Diary of a Philosopher observed that, "He who dwells in the World of the Hindu is subject to influences and experiences unknown to others." Hinduism is something more than an ism. It covers life in all its aspects and God in all his avatars

and manifestations. It is not derivative but a unique and original amalgam of divine beliefs, spiritual insights, profound observations on the meaning of life and human predicament. Western philosophers in the 19th Century rediscovered India's past for the World. Max Müller's contribution is well known. He did much to undo the damage done by historians like James Mill and Macaulay, who with their scanty knowledge of ancient India had the nerve to belittle the religion and religious beliefs of hundreds of millions of people.

In 1891 John Dowsan brought out his, A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History and Literature. Useful as it was, it was a limited work, "derived entirely from the publications of European Scholars." More recently Mr Benjamin Walker gave us Hindu World which he claimed to be "An Encyclopaedic Survey of Hinduism". It raised some eyebrows amongst orthodox Hindus.

The Stutleys might well have given us the authoritative work on the subject. It is a reference work, par excellence. Their scholarship, knowledge, and documentation are praiseworthy. They have described and explained the vast and sacred literature of the Hindus – the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, the Ramayana and Mahabharata – the philosophy, mythology, folklore, rituals and the myriad gods and goddesses in a concise and impressive manner. Each entry is proof of patient meticulous research. Here is a gem!

> ASVIN(S) 'Possessed of horses'. The name of the two divinities who appear in the sky before dawn in a golden carriage drawn by horses or birds. They are sometimes said to be twin stars and identified with the Greek Dioscuri and the Latin Gemini, a Constellation represented as two youths, Castor and Pollux, sitting side by side, whose heads are two bright stars which bear their names. But this identification appears to be relatively late, and as a zodiacal sign has no connection with the Vedic notion of the twin Asvins, especially as the sun is in Gemini in only one month of the year, between 20 May and 21 June. It is possible that the Asvins are connected with the Cannanite twin stars Shachar (dawn) and Shalim (dusk).

The book is studded with many such lively and fascinating entries.

The religious literature of the Hindus is prolix, didactic, complex, contradictory, confusing. Order and form have been given to it here. The etymology of Sanskrit and Pali words is provided in pleasing and systematic detail. The descent, filiations and affiliations provided enhance our knowledge and add to our intellectual excitement. The authors in their introduction write, "Now it is possible to survey the long vista of Indian history which, despite the disparity and fluctuations of its cultural levels, reveals a continuity and a genius for analysis and synthesis that has never been surpassed." Their book amply proves the point they so generously make.

Financial Times, 1978

22. INDIA AND THE FUTURE OF ASIA

India and the Future of Asia by Patwant Singh

MR PATWANT SINGH'S BOOK is readable, provocative and competently written. Its unbridled candour verges on the brash but it never offends. The author has lively views on many subjects and he expresses them with vigour. His is a point of view not entirely unknown in India and generally associated with what is called the "Right" in Indian political parlance. One may be out of sympathy with it but India permits such a point of view to be freely and fully expressed.

On page 7 Mr Patwant Singh quotes Jawaharlal Nehru:

> I would like you to think of this major adventure of India that is taking place today. Criticize it whenever there is any failure, whenever there is any falling off, whenever there is weakness. Criticism will be an incentive to better work. But try to understand and appreciate that something magnificent and colossal is happening in India.

Thereafter he builds up a sustained attack of the foreign and domestic policies following by India since 1947. The author has little patience with non-alignment. He is critical of the

defence policy and not favourably disposed towards the Planning Commission. He is for giving full play to private enterprises. I think the corrective to this is in the interview with British Broadcasting Corporation in London. Speaking on free enterprise he said,

> What is needed is for all good friends of the free and uncontrolled and unmanaged market economy to take a ride back, say for 75 years on H.G. Wells's time machine. They would see a world of no controls, no regulations of any kind, very low wages, very uncertain profits, thin markets and a great deal of unemployment. They would all be clamouring hideously within 24 hours for return tickets. And the businessman would be first of all.

No, developing countries cannot do without planning but they could, of course, do with more efficient planning.

Nevertheless, Mr Patwant Singh has argued his case well. He would have India produce the Atom Bomb and join military pacts. He is well informed and up-to-date although some of his judgements and solutions while looking attractive on paper would be difficult to sustain and implement in practice.

But his concluding chapter is of good value. It presents a modern mind – a rare specimen in the India of today. And that is why what he writes deserves attention, if not approval. This chapter is full of ideas and ends on a hopeful note. He concludes, "If dated and doctrinaire thinking is defeating India's great purposes, impatience with such thinking has to be expressed; what is more it has to be severely criticised. That such criticism is possible in India augurs well for India. It augurs well for Asia too."

I think it was Dante who said that one final act of goodness could undo all the evils of a lifetime and permit one to enter the gates of heaven. The final chapter – "India and the Future of Asia" – makes up for many of the author's earlier excesses.

Sunday Review, New York, 1967

23. GIANT AMONG MEN

Rabindranath Tagore: A Biography by Krishna Kripalani

IT IS NOT SURPRISING that the centenary of the birth of Rabindranath Tagore should have caused something of a universal Tagore revival. Since his death in August 1941, the poet has been out of fashion, and even in India with the exception of his home state of Bengal he was revered rather than read. In the West the reasons for the decline in his popularity were to some extent connected with his nationalist activities. The British never forgave him for renouncing his knighthood in 1919 after the massacre of Jalianwalah Bagh in North India. Tagore was a giant among men, and the belittling has not done him any permanent harm. During his lifetime, however, it did create difficulties for him and added to his burdens.

Krishna Kripalani is eminently suited to be Tagore's biographer. In the early nineteen-thirties he went to England to study law. On his return to India he elected to join Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement and was promptly put in jail by the British Government. In prison he taught himself Bengali and wrote Tagore expressing a desire to study the language at his famous school at Santiniketan (abode of peace). Tagore agreed and Kripalani lived and worked at Santiniketan from 1933 to 1947. In 1937 he married the poet's granddaughter, Nandita, to whom the present study is appropriately dedicated. Thus he writes very much as an "insider" and what he says is at once authentic and interesting. His book is among the best on Tagore in the English language.

To his work of writing this biography Krishna Kripalani has devoted reverence, perception, scholarship and understanding. Tagore was an exceptionally gifted and likable man. Patriot, poet, playwright, philosopher, painter, composer, educationist, novelist, he carried on his struggle against British oppression (and bad taste) in the field of ideas and on the artistic and cultural planes. As Gandhi said, "there was hardly any public activity on which he has not left the impress of his powerful personality."

Yet as in the case of so many others, recognition abroad preceded recognition at home. Not until he was awarded the

Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 (to this day the only Asian-African to hold that distinction) following the publication of Gitanjali (Song Offerings) did his countrymen take him seriously. (Tagore's impatience with ultra and narrow-minded nationalists who decried everything Western did not endear him to some of his compatriots). The author informs us that "pundits and purists used to set passages from his writings to schoolboys saying, 'Rewrite in correct and chaste Bengali'."

Tagore was an indefatigable traveller. He travelled widely if not always wisely (he got himself in trouble on several of his trips, and his meeting with Mussolini he regretted deeply). He enjoyed his role of pilgrim-ambassador and there never was a more genuine bridge-builder between the East and West or between the past and the present. The author says. "To the Western World Tagore's chief significance lies in the new dimension he gave to its understanding of the East.... He startled the West into a recognition of the real India."

In fifteen chapters Tagore's magnificent life, work, travels, personal sorrows and public acclaim are discussed critically and in detail. Charming anecdotes of Tagore-Gandhi meetings adorn the volume. Although Kripalani's is a labour of love, objectivity and sober judgement are not missing, and he justly remarks that Tagore should have "stopped further translations of his poems which became increasingly inadequate." The poet's creative capacity and genius never deserted him, but he overwrote himself in order to collect funds for his school and university. He was aware of his deficiencies and said, "My poems when rendered into English are like birds with their wings clipped."

Krishna Kripalani has covered an immense canvas with restraint and commendable economy. His is an admirable and, I have no doubt, a durable memorial to one of India's greatest sons.

New York Times Book Review, 1962

24. C.P. SNOW

Stranger and Brother – A Portrait of C.P. Snow by Philip Snow

TO MY GREAT REGRET I never met C.P. Snow. We had several friends in common. He was probably aware of my existence. He was the star book reviewer for the London Financial Times. Once or twice a year, our reviews appeared on the same page. When he suddenly died in 1980, I felt a strange kind of personal loss.

Philip Snow has written a charming, revealing and adulatory book about his famous elder brother. The two corresponded over the years and Lord Snow kept nothing secret from his brother – not even his extramarital activities. This book is the account of their relationship and Snow's progress from a near working class background to a world famous man of letters.

C.P. Snow was something of a renaissance man. A distinguished scientist, who became a very successful Cambridge don, novelist, writer and civil servant. An intellectual, who loved watching cricket at Fenners in Cambridge and Lords in London (his touchstone was whether one was in the Bradman class – may he be a politician, author, scientist, etc.). Snow enriched the English language by giving it two phrases, which have now become common currency – "Corridors of Power" and the "Two Cultures". To me the most fascinating part of the book is C.P. Snow's friendship with G.H. Hardy, the great Cambridge Mathematician. Both shared a common interest in cricket. Hardy is perhaps among the three greatest mathematicians of the last hundred years and India owes him a major but unacknowledged debt. Hardy in his book, A Mathematician's Apology, writes,

> I still say to myself when I am depressed and find myself forced to listen to pompous and tiresome people, 'well, I have done one thing you could never have done, and that is to have collaborated with both Littlewood and Ramanujam on something like equal terms.'

Hardy discovered Ramanujam in 1913. He got him a scholarship to Cambridge. Ramanujam died aged thirty-three, but not before Hardy had made the world aware of the young

South Indian's originality and genius. Snow in his book of essays, Variety of Men paints a superbly attractive picture of the Hardy-Ramanujam friendship.

C.P. Snow was a prolific writer, and the list of his fiction and non-fiction works is formidable. But it was the Rede Lecture, delivered at Cambridge in 1959 that made him very widely known. "The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution", started a world-wide debate and controversy. (Snow was paid nine Guineas for the lecture – the same rate as in 1525 when the lecture was first given). Snow felt, "the need simply to express the fissure between intellectuals at one pole, the Arts, and at the other, Science, in the clearest possible way," writes Philip Snow and goes on, "but his honest account of the lack of communication between scientists and non-scientists on everyday and more critically important levels aroused the deepest feelings of anxiety." President Kennedy and Bertrand Russell welcomed the debate which continued for several years.

Snow collected many honorary degrees and titles. He was knighted and Prime Minister Wilson made him a Life Peer, but the two honours that C.P. Snow desired most eduded him – The O.M (Order of Merit) and the Nobel Prize. Here his sense of proportion betrayed him. He should have known that in no area was he in the Bradman class.

25. THE WRITER AS HERO

Papa Hemingway by A.E. Hotchner

ERNEST HEMINGWAY DEFINED COURAGE as "grace under pressure". So much said so well in three simple words. A more memorable definition of that most admirable of human virtues I cannot recall.

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) wrote simple, hard-hitting prose which has had a powerful and enduring influence on younger writers all over the world. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954 after the publication of The Old Man and The Sea and the award citation said, "For his powerful and style-forming mastery of modern narrative." He worked with passionate intensity to achieve this mastery and

integrity. Hemingway tells Hotchner in this gripping book that he had "re-written the ending [of A Farewell To Arms] thirty-nine times in manuscript and now I worked it over thirty times in proof, trying to get it right. I finally got it right."

A.E. Hotchner met Hemingway for the first time in Havana in 1948 where he had been sent to interview the author for the Cosmopolitan magazine of New York. Papa hated publicity but he liked Hotchner and they got on famously. Friendship ensued and this book is an account of thirteen years of that friendship and much more.

Hotchner hero-worshipped Hemingway. They spent many weeks together in Cuba, Spain, Venice, Paris, New York. Hemingway was an exciting, exasperating, generous, adventure-loving, hard-drinking, fantastically knowledgeable host and companion. He talked almost as brilliantly as he wrote. Mr Hotchner gives us the robust, straight from the shoulder Hemingway talk on wine, women and war, on art and artist, on books and writers, on literature and the art of writing, on love, friendship and marriage, on bull-fighting, boats and bores, on films and film-producers.

Hemingway on love-making – "she had that pure Renaissance beauty, black hair straight, eyes round at the bottoms, Botticelli skin, breasts of Venus Rising... So we talked and drank and suddenly we were making love there in the kitchen and never has a promise been better fulfilled... It was like being at sea in the most tempestuous storm that ever boiled up; you think you'll go under the rise and falls, but ride it out, knowing you are close to solving the mystery of the deep." On Paris: "if you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a movable feast."

There are such gems in each chapter till we come to the final sad, grim, frightening, dark days when Hemingway was failing in body, mind and spirit and tried the affection and patience of his wife, friends and admirers. "What does a man care about? Staying healthy. Working good. Eating and drinking with his friends. Enjoying himself in bed. I haven't got any of them. Hotch. Do you understand Goddamit None of them, - –" And so the author of For Whom the Bell

Tolls could bear to live no more and on 2 July 1961 shot himself at his Ketchum home in Idaho.

Mr Hotchner's is a very commendable literary achievement. He almost succeeds in making a dead man come alive.

Weekend Review, 1967

26. A DELECTABLE FEAST

The Past Masters — Politics and Politicians 1906-1939 by Harold Macmillan

AT EIGHTY-TWO MR HAROLD Macmillan continues to get the best out of life. Mentally alert, wise and witty, he has become something of an institution and father figure in a country which adores institutions if not father figures.

Physically he gives the impression of being incapacitated — a deliberate slow shuffle, that vacant look of non-recognition, but, in fact, he is very fit as is clear from his current passage to India.

Two years ago, the sixth and final volume of his memoirs appeared. These volumes, along with Churchill's six, form the most authoritative account of world events during the better part of this century. Mr Macmillan has offered us a truly Super-Mac six-course intellectual feast in his memoirs — a more solid though less entertaining offering than Churchill's. The present volume is, to pursue the gastronomical metaphor, a savoury course. While writing his memoirs, he must inevitably have gathered enough material for an additional and miscellaneous volume. Having grown up with the major events of the 20th century and been a member of parliament for over four decades with two very short breaks, he saw and came to know the great figures of his time well.

His somewhat unorthodox conservative views kept him out of office till his forty sixth year but once there he got to the top very soon making a success of his ministerial jobs. As prime minister he made his masterful contribution to British political life and coined the "wind of change" phrase which has now come to stay. While out of office he ran the family publishing firm which bears his name with flair and profit.

This volume contains Mr Macmillan's recollection and assessments of the great figures of his generation — Lloyd

George, Ramsay MacDonald, Stanley Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain and Churchill. He gives his views and opinions with candour and humour. His sketches of some of the lesser known, though no less arresting, figures like Lord Rothermere, Lady Astor and Nye Bevan are full of new insights. His views on elections and electioneering are of the utmost value since he knows politics from the inside. His chapter on the role of "women in politics" should be of particular interest to readers in India, for this country has been far ahead of the West in this particular field of political activity. While parliamentary government has existed for a long time in England, parliamentary democracy with "one man, one vote" did not arrive till 1929 when women over the age of twenty-one were given the vote for the first time.

On Churchill and Chamberlain nothing very startling or new is put forward. Mr Macmillan is too well-mannered to quote Churchill's description of Ramsay MacDonald as "that boneless wonder who possessed the gift of compressing the maximum words with the minimum thought". His long chapter on Lloyd George is both entertaining and instructive. By all accounts Lloyd George was an outstanding politician who left his imprint on British political life for all time to come. Being an extension of the 19th century into the 20th, Mr Macmillan has refrained from saying anything about Lloyd George's private life and his well-known capacity for womanising. That he was a brilliant and shrewd politician is clear from the advice he gave to Mr Macmillan when the younger man had just entered Parliament:

> Later in the evening Lloyd George came up to me and said, "Macmillan, that was an interesting speech of yours." I was naturally flattered. He continued: "If you don't mind my saying so, you have no idea how to make a speech." I answered, "Will you tell me?" and with great kindness he took me up to his room to give me his fatherly advice. It ran something like this. "First of all you are a new member. You always speak in a thin House, probably in the dinner-hour. Even I am not called till six. Never say more than one thing. Yours was an essay, a good essay, but with a large number of separate points. Just say one thing, when

you are a Minister two things, and when you are a Prime Minister winding up a debate, perhaps three. Remember your own position. There will be few listeners. What you want is that somebody will go to the Smoking Room and say, 'You know Macmillan made a very good speech.' 'What did he say?' someone will ask. It must be easy to give a ready answer — one point. Of course you wrap it up in different ways. You say it over and over again with different emphases and different illustrations. You say it forcefully, regretfully, even perhaps threateningly; but it is a single clear point. That begins to make your reputation."

Each of us in our various spheres could benefit from such splendid advice. Mr Macmillan did and eventually landed at 10, Downing Street and stayed there for more than six years. The Past Masters is a book to read and possess.

27. ADLAI E. STEVENSON

Portrait: Adlai E. Stevenson — Politician, Diplomat, Friend by Alden Whitman and the New York Times.

HOW DOES ONE REVIEW a book that has the New York Times as one of the authors? It is like trying to read the palm of a public meeting. And yet in their joint effort Alden Whitman and the Times have given us what is on the whole a satisfactory and satisfying portrait of Adlai E. Stevenson, although their book suffers at times from a too hurried pace and too superficial analysis of the life and work of a great and unique American statesman.

Unfortunately for them, but fortunately for the reader, the authors have had to compete with Mr Stevenson's own prose. In their extensive quotations from his speeches and writings the Governor's natural excellence is continually evident; it is a triumph of literature over journalism, of thought over instant comment. This Mr Whitman acknowledges. "In a sense," he writes, "the genius of Stevenson was aided and abetted by the time in which he lived. Reflective politicians were not prominent in the U.S. of the mid-fifties;

the former Governor of Illinois nearly pre-empted the field. Furthermore, the entire West, at a time when it was most challenged and most needed the gift of eloquence, lacked leaders with the energy and ability to speak and write memorable English."

It fell to Adlai Stevenson to "talk sense to the American people" and, in the words of the late President Kennedy, the Governor "during his Presidential campaigns raised the level of our national political dialogue." Nothing in the fifties damaged the image of the United States more than the excess of Senator McCarthy; nothing restored it more than the public expressions of Stevenson.

Two facts emerge from reading Portrait. One, Governor Stevenson was a late starter. He was an average student and up to his forty-eighth year nothing really remarkable happened to him or because of him. Second, although Adlai Stevenson gave some an impression of simplicity, he was a complex man, well and widely read (Mr Whitman's unsubstantiated opinion to the contrary). Stevenson's commitment to peace, goodwill, and understanding between men and nations was total.

He was a visionary, and visionaries seldom make practical politicians. Governor Stevenson was, of course, not incapable of ambition, but it was never his ruling passion. He always accepted office reluctantly, and the doubts that assail honest men never left him. This is well brought out by Mr Whitman although the treatment given to the 1952, 1956, and 1960 campaigns is sketchy compared to that offered by Theodore White, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. and Theodore Sorensen.

The first half of Portrait is readable biography and bearable reportage. However, the later half of the book neither enlarges our knowledge of Stevenson nor sheds any fresh light on events after 1952. The impact of Governor Stevenson on the United Nations cannot be summed up in a few journalistic strokes; it is deserving of a serious and detailed study, which will no doubt be forthcoming soon.

Stuart Brown's volume is obviously a labour of love, although as a study of Adlai E. Stevenson it is inadequate and patchy. In his preface Mr Brown states that his book is not intended to be definitive, and it certainly is not. He also says that

Governor Stevenson "himself was, of course, my chief source of information" but except for two or three letters, that the Governor wrote him in 1963, little additional information is made available here. Younger readers will, however, find the book useful, and it may encourage them to ask for more.

Man of Honor, Man of Peace is pure Stevenson and therefore sheer delight. Beautifully produced, the book presents the U.N. Ambassador's life through innumerable pictures and his own words. President Johnson's statement on Mr Stevenson's death forms the preface, and the volume also carries eulogies by the United Nations Secretary-General U Thant and Vice President Hubert Humphrey, as well as extracts from tributes to the Governor from world leaders. Among the quotations from Mr Stevenson himself is a portion of his moving eulogy to Sir Winston Churchill. "We shall hear no longer the remembered eloquence and wit, the old courage and defiance, the robust serenity of indomitable faith. Our world is thus poorer, our political dialogue is diminished and the sources of public inspiration run more thinly for all of us. There is a lonesome place against the sky." I was surprised, therefore, to notice one omission: Mr Stevenson's tribute to Prime Minister Nehru in the Security Council on 27 May 1964. Because what he then said of Mr Nehru in many ways applies to himself: "He was one of God's great creations in our time."

Saturday Review, 1966

28. THE LOST HERO

The Lost Hero by Mihir Bose

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE WAS the maverick Indian politician. The legend of Netaji (Leader) Bose continues to grow. Nearly forty years after his mysterious death in a plane crash (August 1945), hundreds of thousands of Indians refuse to accept the fact and expect Bose to turn up any day. As late as 23 January 1975, a hundred thousand people gathered in Kanpur in north India to witness the reappearance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his 79th birthday!!

Mr Mihir Bose, a fellow Bengali, is no relation, but an obvious admirer. Few Bengalis are not. He does not write as

a Bengali or for Bengal alone. He writes as a student of history. His book is a serious attempt to portray the dramatic life, trials and travails of an extraordinary and dynamic political figure, whose name and fame puts him in the top political league, next only to Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Mihir Bose pitches Nehru and Bose as rivals, but Nehru did not look upon Bose as a rival and genuinely tried to help the younger man, who was not the easiest person to help. At times Bose had to be saved from himself.

Bose was born in Cuttack in Orissa in 1897 of middle-class parents. He had his first brush with authority while at Presidency College, Calcutta, and early in life showed grit and determination. He passed the I.C.S. Examination while at Cambridge, but resigned soon after in 1921 and returned to India, a minor hero for throwing up so sought after a career. He joined Gandhi and the jail-going commenced. His real idol and mentor, however, was C.R. Das, the urbane Calcutta lawyer. When Das suddenly died in 1925, Bose was shattered and from then he was very much on his own. He had no genuine belief in Gandhi's non-violent programme and the break came finally in 1939, when Bose took on the Mahatma frontally and got himself elected President of the Indian National Congress, trouncing Gandhiji's nominee — Dr P. Sitaramayya. Bose won a battle, but lost the war. Mahatma Gandhi did not tolerate open indiscipline of this kind. He could make life very uncomfortable for those who crossed his path. Bose was no match for the saintly politician and was forced to resign his Presidentship. His new party, The Forward Bloc, did not really get off the ground and Bose escaped from India to Germany via Afghanistan in 1941. It is an amazing story and Mihir Bose does justice to it. From 1941 to 1945, Bose was in Germany, Italy and Japan, where he met Hitler, Mussolini and General Tojo, trying to form an anti-British outfit. He did finally establish the I.N.A. — Indian National Army — with Japanese support. The I.N.A. consisted of Indians who had been taken prisoners by the Japanese. To the British the I.N.A. volunteers were rebels against the King. To Indians they were patriots. Unwisely the British arrested three senior officers of the I.N.A. — Shah

Nawaz (Muslim), Dhillon (Sikh) and Saigal (Hindu). Their trial caught the imagination of the Indian people and created a revolutionary situation, which was contained only after all three were acquitted. To understand the events leading to Indian independence in 1947, a knowledge of the I.N.A. is an essential ingredient and one can make little of the I.N.A. unless one knows something about Bose. Mihir Bose educates the reader on both counts.

Bose died young – forty-eight – and his destiny remained unfulfilled. It is tempting to speculate on what Bose might have done for India had he not perished in that plane crash. Mr Mihir Bose has not resisted the temptation, commenting that, "had Bose returned to India after the war, he might well have prevented the tragedy [of the partition of India]. He was not a tired politician ready to accept office under any terms. Although his uncompromising hostility to Jinnah and Pakistan might have led to civil war, the cost of that could not have been greater than the senseless waste of partition." Alas! It was not quite that simple.

Subhas Chandra Bose remains an enigmatic figure. Mihir Bose's meticulously researched and readable book removes some of the mist, but also adds to the legend.

Financial Times, London, 1983

29. ATTLEE

Attlee by Kenneth Harris

MY ONE AND ONLY personal encounter with the laconic Clement Attlee remains etched in my mind. In the late nineteen fifties he came to Delhi as a guest of Pandit Nehru. I met him at Palam Air Port. After the usual formal pleasantries I asked him if he had read Lord Morrison's Memoirs. The former Labour Prime Minister took his pipe out of his mouth, looked me straight in the face and gently dropped this nugget, "No, I have not read his memoirs... gave up reading fiction long ago." In a few words he had dismissed and demolished Herbert Morrison, who on more than one occasion challenged Attlee's leadership.

Kenneth Harris knew Lord Attlee well and over a number

of years. He obviously admired him. There was much in Attlee's life which called for admiration, Churchill's jibe, "Mr Attlee is a modest man; he has much to be modest about", appears apocryphal and Harris makes no mention of it. Being the man he was, Lord Attlee would have made some pithy remark about the length of this biography, but on the whole he would have approved of it. It is what a good biography ought to be; accurate, critical, readable, sound of judgement, informative and above all it must bring the subject of the biography and the times he lived in to life. On all these counts Mr Harris scores high marks. Reading his book I realised afresh what a remarkable man the uncharismatic Attlee was. He is now generally accepted as the greatest peace time British Prime Minister of the century.

Clement Attlee was born in 1883 (the year Karl Marx died) and lived to be 84, dying peacefully in his sleep on 8 October 1967, leaving the modest sum of £6,700 to his son. It was a full life, a good, rewarding and eventful life. A life of very considerable political success and solid and durable achievement. It was also an upright and clean life. Like Jawaharlal Nehru, Attlee had no past to tidy up.

Nothing in his early years gave indication of his future eminence. He was painfully shy. Did not excel in everything at Haileybury or Oxford. It was his association with the East End of London which aroused his social conscience and converted a born conservative into a committed socialist. His political and moral beliefs were formed during these years when he came face to face with abject poverty and social injustice. His rectitude and fortitude and calm manner were in evidence by the time the 1914-18 war began. He immediately joined the army and ended his army days as a major. He was twice wounded and was the last but one man out of Gallipoli in 1915. Throughout he never worried or fussed. He kept his feet firmly on the ground, his head was never in the clouds, he spoke to his men in direct terms and was not given to fog-making utterance or verbal overkill. Even in the army he identified himself with the common man. Mr Harris traces Attlee's development with meticulous care, discernment and objectivity.

Major C.R. Attlee plunged into politics in 1919. He

was elected Mayor of Stepney, was elected to parliament in 1922 and became a junior Minister in Ramsay MacDonald's first Labour government in 1924. The author gives a vivid account of the goings on in the British political establishment and shows how it was being fundamentally altered with the emergence of the Labour Party. Political loyalty was for Attlee the supreme political virtue. He never once wavered in his loyalty to the party. The only political friends he had – Sam Watson, leader of the Durham Miners and Ernest Bevin, the formidable T.U.C. leader and Attlee's Foreign Minister – he never let down. Attlee was neither drifter nor a quitter. In the 1931 elections the Labour Party was desiccated. Among the known names only Attlee retained his seat and that too by the skin of his teeth. Arthur Henderson, Hugh Dalton, Greenwood Emmanual Shinwell (still going strong at 98), Herbert Morrison, Pethwick-Lawrence all lost: Lansbury, the leader of the Labour Party, was unwell and Attlee suddenly found himself Acting Leader of the Labour Party. When Lansbury resigned in 1935, Attlee became leader with the powerful backing of Bevin who loathed Morrison who had challenged Attlee.

Attlee remained leader for twenty years, holding the party together and patching up the never ending feuds of his brilliant and brittle colleagues on the Right and the Left, Morrison and Dalton, Cripps and the original Nye Bevan the last three possessing intellects far superior to that of Attlee's. Things seldom got out of hand. Attlee was the ideal chairman and his summing up of divergent view points was precise, correct and confidence inspiring. When he joined Churchill's coalition government during the war, his grasp of the intricacies and technique of modern government made him a most valuable second in command.

Supreme triumph came on 26 July 1945 when the British voter gave Winston Churchill, "the order of the boot" and gave Labour a resounding victory. Attlee presided over a Labour ministry of exceptionally talented individuals of whom Nye Bevan, the Health Minister won world-wide fame. The Labour government of 1945-51 under Attlee changed the texture of British life and laid the foundations of the welfare state. He changed the world by transferring power to

India and Pakistan.

The main interest of this important book for us in India is the portion dealing with the "Indian Problems". Here Mr Kenneth Harris disappoints. He himself acknowledges that the independence of India was Attlee's greatest achievement, yet his treatment of this historic event is patchy and unsatisfactory. Not a single Indian – Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Jinnah – gets a word in. Neither does he do justice to the Indian Freedom Movement, which was dedicated to a purpose and not a doctrine.

Attlee himself thought he would be remembered, "for India". His association with this country went back to the 1920s. He was a member of the Simon Commission. He spent several months travelling throughout the country in 1927-28. The Congress boycotted the Commission and Attlee did not meet any of the leading lights of the Congress, but he became aware of the complexities of the "Indian Problem". For the rest of his active political life he became the Labour Party's expert on India, Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence notwithstanding.

Attlee was a decision taker par excellence, not given to obfuscation and allergic to embroidered language and phrase making. Soon after becoming Prime Minister he applied his mind to the "India Problem". He sacked the out-of-his-depth Wavell without much ado. (A lover of cricket, Attlee thought a change of bowling was necessary). His appointment of Lord Louis Mountbatten was a stroke of genius, apart from being daringly imaginative. Many people have taken credit for this appointment, but the decision was Attlee's and Attlee's alone. For once the right man was given the right job at the right time. Mountbatten rose to the occasion. The men suited the hour. Let's get it straight from Attlee,

> It was my own thought entirely to choose Mountbatten to negotiate India's independence. I knew his record in the war, and I decided he was the man to get on good personal relations with the Indians, which he did. He and I agreed entirely. I told him I wanted a man to end the British Raj.

Such clarity and decisiveness are uncommon. Having given

Mountbatten the job, he left him to get on with it and fully supported him.

He spoke at some length in the House of Commons in India. His speech contained a not so gentle putdown of Churchill whose Indian record was lamentable. Attlee said,

> In approaching this subject, we all have to recognize how little we know about India, and how soon that knowledge we have gets out of date. I quite recognize that I am out of date. I ended my time on the Simon Commission nearly 18 years ago. I therefore hesitate to be dogmatic or prophetic about what may happen in India. In this, I admit, I differ from the leader of the Opposition (Churchill). I think his practical acquaintance with India ended some 50 years ago. He formed some strong opinions – I might almost say prejudices – then, they have remained with him ever since.

If for Attlee India was a triumph, Palestine was a tragedy, and Mr Harris is severely critical of his handling of it. Also on Africa he gets poor marks. Attlee knew next to nothing about Africa and did even less in that area. No advance to self-rule was made during his tenure. After 1950 the Attlee team ran out of steam and ideas and not surprisingly lost the 1951 election. Attlee resigned as Leader of the Labour Party and in the evening of his life was at peace with himself.

He became an Earl and used public transport to get to the House of Parliament, he travelled, stayed with his family. The death of his wife Violet left him forlorn and lonely. Theirs was an ideal marriage – they were meant for each other. He also wrote a disappointing and dull autobiography, As it Happened. When he reached 80 a friend asked, "How does it feel to be 80 – Clem." Answered Attlee, "Better than the alternative."

Honours were showered on him. This tickled him, and on getting the garter (the highest British Honour) he recorded his feelings in a limerick.

Few thought he was even a starter.
There were many who thought themselves smarter.
But he ended P.M.

CH* and OM**
And Earl and a knight of the garter.

Not a bad record for a Socialist!

30. AN INSEPARABLE HUMANITY

One World to Share by Shridath Ramphal. Introduction by Barbara Ward.

THE WORLD IS GOING through one of those periods when there seems no solution for anything. In such a situation even a deadlock is some sort of a solution. One look at the globe and the heart sinks. What a mess we all are in. Gold, liquid and solid, costs the earth and the rich get richer and the poor don't have a worthwhile prayer going for them. 1980 has begun on a grim note. Is it going to be downhill all the way? Is there no hope?

In a mood of self doubt and introspection I took up Shridath Ramphal's One World to Share, a collection of speeches made by him between 1975 and1979 in different parts of the world. The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth has addressed himself to the most serious and urgent problem facing mankind. Indian by descent, Guyanese by birth, Western by education and cosmopolitan by temperament he is well qualified not only to examine and identify these problems but also to offer some possible solutions. His vision of "an inseparable humanity" deserves attention. Whether it will get through to the power brokers remains to be seen. The thread that runs through this volume (and holds it together) is that of conciliation, cooperation, friendship and understanding. Mr Ramphal has the enviable gift of articulation. He goes to the heart of the matter without obfuscation. His views on the North-South dialogue, the problems facing the Third World are devoid of cliches, debased and tired rhetoric and the mind-numbing jargon of international conferences, where people say a great deal but convey very little. Ramphal's passionate plea is that the

* Companion of Honour
* * Order of Merit.

North-South developed and developing countries get together to offer the world a new economic order, thus giving hope precedence over despair.

The interdependence of nations makes the Commonwealth an extraordinary association and its S.G. a focus of attention. Mr Ramphal is aware of the limits to which the Commonwealth can go. "The Commonwealth cannot negotiate for the world but it can help the world to negotiate." This is precisely what he has been attempting to do. For a number of years the Commonwealth was suffering from "benign neglect". He has stirred things up. All strength to his shoulder.

On Southern Africa and apartheid he is at once forthright and uncompromising. It is satisfying to record that Mr Ramphal played a very significant role in making the Lusaka Conference of Heads of Government a success — a much needed success — by coming up with an acceptable formula on Rhodesia. We are not yet home and dry on that score but we are almost there.

This timely book ends with a warning which we must take to heart. "The world has become a 'global village'; but we are yet to develop an ethic of Community. We have made our planet a single habitation, man's science in particular; but it remains a house divided against itself. Homo Sapiens... is in danger of becoming an unguided missile destined to self-destruction unless he becomes Homo Sentiens as well." Take heed planet Earth.

1980

31. RETURN PASSAGE TO INDIA

The Serpent and the Rope by Raja Rao

RAJA RAO'S SECOND NOVEL, The Serpent and the Rope, is a whale of a book. His first, Kanthapura, appeared in 1938 and was hailed both in India and England. A collection of short stories, The Cow of the Barricade and Other Stories, was published in India in 1947. The output may be small; the quality is excellent.

Raja Rao has said somewhere, "The Indian novel can only be epic in form and metaphysical in nature. It can only have

story within story to show all stories are only parables." This is very largely true of his latest novel.

The author's immense erudition, his restless curiosity, his unorthodox orthodoxy, his flaming Brahminism, his noble conception of India, his mastery of the English language and idiom make The Serpent and the Rope a remarkable, even unique, book. God, truth, love, nature, beauty, sex, art music, religion, philosophy, metaphysics, and East-West encounter are discussed leisurely and with sensitivity. No single theme permeates the book. Fantasy piles over fantasy, plot upon subplot, the work has little structure in the conventional sense.

But if the purists dismiss it as a clever and hectic accumulation of anecdotes by a mysterious, muddled mind, they will have missed the point. The vision may be personal, the ramifications are universal.

The plot is woven around the lives of Ramaswamy, an Indian research scholar (interested in the Albigensian heresy, of all things) at the University of Caen, and the beautiful golden-haired Madeleine, whom he meets there. First friendship, then love and marriage. A son is born, he dies. Ramaswamy has to rush back to India for his father's funeral. This separation and exposure to Indian reality does something to Madeleine and her husband. On his return to Europe differences and complications arise: something between them has snapped. During his sojourn in India, Ramaswamy has met Savitri, the fiancee of his Indian friend, Pratap.

Here begins the subplot. The two meet again at Cambridge in England, and an extraordinary love affair ensues, more spiritual than sensual, lyrical rather than real, and yet not without passion.

The plot is not remarkable. The way it is unfolded is. The implications of the meeting between the East and the West are exposed with candour and daring on the most intimate plane. People and places, both Indian and European, are portrayed in masterly strokes. Yet the charge of overwriting has to be made; the novel's prolixity becomes tiresome at places, and one is tempted to skip. However, not for long. Raja Rao's style is compelling, uncommon, poetic.

Writing in 1938, he said, "One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought movement that looks maltreated... We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression has to be a dialect... distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American — Time alone will justify it."

Time has justified. All strength to his dialect, all fulfilment to his endeavours. The Serpent and the Rope is an achievement of a high order. It is also a strange literary experience.

Saturday Review, 1963

32. THE SMOKE THAT THUNDERS

The Smoke That Thunders by Dominic Mulaisho

DOMINIC MULAISHO IS A remarkable Zambian: economist, former civil servant and now President Kaunda's principal Adviser on Economic Affairs. Here we meet him in his avatar as a novelist.

With the exception of the Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiog'O (Petals of Blood) Mulaisho is Central and East Africa's most accomplished and gifted writer. In his first novel, The Tongue of the Dumb (1971) he gave ample proof of his talent.

The Smoke That Thunders is set in Kandaha, a not so imaginary British Colony in Central Africa between Rhodesia and Zambia, not too far from Musi-o-Tunya, the Victoria Falls. Fact and fiction overlap. The Zambian freedom struggle and the current upheavals in Zimbabwe provide the setting. Kawala, the upright and noble leader of the People's Army of Liberation Party (PALP), is easily identifiable, as is Sir Ray Norris, the Polish immigrant who made good in Rhodesia.

The white expatriates are deftly drawn and their imbecile world of racial arrogance, administrative high-handedness and folly is devastatingly exposed in a matter-of-fact way, without artifice, or literary sophistication.

Forster's English administrators in India appear as harmless Oxbridge dons compared to the colonial scum sent out to

Africa. The African ethos – anguish, injustice, hope and defiance are all well done. Here we are in the hands of a narrator whose skill has matured and sympathies extended. Behind all the brutality and bloodshed and white barbarity people of good will exist on both sides. Not once does the prose crack or dialogue ring false.

In the end Kandaha gets independence with Ka-..ala as Head of State, but the Bristol Gold Syndicate the real power in the Colony survives the change. The whites leave by the front door and return by the tradesmen's entrance. Hats off to their unctuous adaptability.

The doomed love of George Norris – son of Sir Ray – for the lovely black girl Anna Aliness forms the most moving part of the novel. The right tone and voice are adapted and there is no sentimentality. Young Norris is killed – not by the "rebels" but by a shrapnel from an official bomb.

To me the most engaging character is Mr Patel, an Indian businessman. His speech defies grammar and he transcends morality with breathtaking ease. It is not an entirely unfair portrait, except that while all Patels are Indians, not all Indians are Patels.

Those interested in Africa, its people and problems will find Smoke very worthwhile reading.

Financial Times, 1978

33. THE INDIAN NOVEL

Review of *Chemmeen* by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai. Translated by Narayana Menon from Malayalam.

OVER A HUNDRED YEARS ago Lord Macaulay announced that, "a single bookshelf of English books was worth all the literature of India and Arabia." A man who could hazard a remark like that could say almost anything, and not for nothing did Lord Melbourne comment, "I wish I were as cocksure of any one thing as Macaulay is of everything."

Regardless of Macaulay's notion, the fact is that Indian thought and literature achieved a unique fullness, freshness and depth and thousand years before Shakespeare was born. The novel however, is a comparative newcomer and not till the last quarter of the nineteenth century did it make its appea-

rance on the Indian literary scene; Bengal leading the way as it did in so many other fields. Gradually the medium caught on and novels of great merit began to appear in almost all major Indian languages. In the West the novel seems at times to be suffering from exhaustion; in India it is just coming into its own and is a dynamic and vital thing.

Chemmeen was originally written in Malayalam, a Dravidian language spoken by fifteen million people of the South-western coastal state, Kerala. Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai is Kerala's foremost novelist and Chemmeen won for him the President's Award, the most prized literary honour in India. His output is enormous; he wrote Chemmeen in three weeks. The novel is set in a fishing community in Kerala. It is about the youthful indiscretion of a young girl, Karuthamma, the daughter of a poor fisherman. The indiscretion is utterly human, and yet it leads with terrifying and awesome inevitability to unhappiness, misery, destruction and death. Karuthamma's is a tragedy without comfort, a tragedy that leaves one not with mechanical grief but with a gnawing, unending remorse for which there are no explanations this side of the grave.

The story is simple. Karuthamma and Pareekutti, a comparatively well-to-do Moslem boy, have grown up together. They have shared the carefree joys and pleasures of childhood. Youth complicates matters, as it often does, and they fall in love. It will never do: tradition, custom, the village elders, the Headman, the wind and the water, all are against these two youths. Not for the first or last time convention triumphs over instinct and passion and love is crushed by the social jack-boot.

It is an age-old belief that an unchaste woman brings ill-luck, that the men at sea are safe in rough weather only when chaste and pure women pray for them on the shore. Karuthamma's flirtation with the Moselm boy (the neighbours say she is Pareekutti's mistress) threatens to bring forth the outraged retribution of Goddess Katalamma. So Karuthamma is married to Palani — a simple, headstrong fisherman. They know no real happiness as the shadow of Pareekutti stands between them. In this tragic situation, a tragic denouement seems inevitable.

Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's austere and laconic style

reminds one of Hemingway at its best. He draws his substance from simple people; they may be poor as church mice, but they are warm with life, and the author captures all their dimensions without sentimentality. The sea, the fishermen, their festivals, rituals and sacrifices, their greed and devotion are all captured with mastery. Narayan Menon (whose book on Yeats was highly praised by Orwell, Edwin Muir and E.M. Forster) had done an excellent translation. Chemmeen deserves to be widely read.

New York Times, 1962.

34. THE CAMBRIDGE APOSTLES

The Cambridge Apostles: The Early Years by Peter Allen

BERTRAND RUSSELL, WHO ALONG with E.M. Forster and Maynard Keynes, was perhaps the most famous Apostle, once said that the Ten Commandments should be approached like a Cambridge examination paper on the basis that, "only six need be attempted." After reading Mr Peter Allen's sound, but not, I regret to record, lively book I came to the conclusion that one should approach his early Apostles in a similar manner. Not all are to be taken seriously, not all are from the top drawer. High-minded, earnest, brilliant, serious, public spirited they might have been but today only the names of F.D. Maurice, Henry Sidgwick and Tennyson ring a bell. All three were remarkable men. The influence of Maurice may not have been wide but it was deep. The Worting Men's College which he founded in 1854 was to have a distinguished list of teachers and made a notable contribution to liberalising British attitudes on the number of major issues.

Nevertheless the impact that The Society made on the early Victorian age was not insignificant in the fields of religion, education, philosophy and intellectual life in general. It attracted young men of diverse intellectual, literary, political and philosophical interests. Their passion for free discussion (as opposed to argument) ensured enlightened airing of their innermost feelings with absolute candour on all possible subjects. They also (perhaps inadvertently) awakened to the perils of becoming an intellectual Mafia and never degenerated into one. Some of them took themselves

more seriously than necessary and one or two like Sterling and Kemble displayed extravagance both in speech and behaviour but did no damage on a large scale.

Mr Allen traces the history of The Society from its inception in 1820 to the middle of the 19th Century and devotes much space to the 1820s and 1830s. His chapters on F.D. Maurice are well informed. He has been meticulous in his research and impartial in his judgements. He offers good reasons for The Society's capacity to survive. In spite of all his scholarly skill the book does not offer gripping reading. This is to some extent understandable as the early Apostles were not quite as engaging and original a set as G.E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, Lowes Dickinson, A.N. Whitehead, Roger Fry, E.M. Forster, the Trevelyan Brothers, Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey and Leonard Woolf. Mr Allen himself concedes that, "for someone who has admired the idealism, the energy, the enthusiasm of the Apostles in their first years of comradeship, the story of their gradual decline towards old age and death is not pleasant to dwell on." It is therefore hoped that Mr Allen will give us a second volume which will cover the activities of the Apostles in the 20th Century. That should make fascinating reading and might throw fresh light on the Bloomsbury world of personal relationships – some of them very personal indeed!

Financial Times, 1979

35. A TIGER FOR MALGUDI

A Tiger for Malgudi by R.K. Narayan; *R.K. Narayan: A Critical Appreciation* by William Walsh

A TIGER FOR MALGUDI is a triumph. Raja the tiger is a real champion. He comes out better than most human beings. In his introduction, R.K. Narayan tells us how the idea of writing a novel with a tiger as the central "character" came to him. "During the Kumbha Mela festival, which recurs every twelve years at the confluence of the three rivers, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati in Allahabad, a vast crowd gathers for a holy bath in the rivers. Amidst that ocean of humanity also arrives a hermit with his companion, a tiger. He does not hold the animal on a leash since he claims they were brothers in

previous lives. The tiger freely moves about without hurting or scaring anyone.

"Such a combination seemed incredible when I read reports of it and saw the photographs. But as I got used to the idea, I began to speculate on its possibilities for a novel."

He goes on, "Why a tiger? Why not a mouse?" asked a smart journalist who had come to interview me, when I mentioned the subject of my novel. I could only reply, 'So that the chief character may not be trampled upon or lost sight of in a hole'."

R.K. Narayan's knowledge of the animal world is quite astonishing. He must have spent long hours in a zoo to study and watch the life style of a tiger. He gets inside Raja and we become familiar with all the moods of this remarkable and feared quadruped. So is his familiarity with the circus world where poor Raja lands himself rather unexpectedly and generally has a thin time, until he liberates himself by doing away with the menacing circus master, escapes and meets his guru, but not before he manages to frighten the life out of the headmaster of the local school where he goes after running away from the circus. This part of the book is vintage Narayan, hilarious and comic. What a master of his craft he is! It is all so superbly done.

It is a tale well and wisely told, worthy to invite comparison with the best that the Panchtantra offers. It shows Narayan at the peak of his creative genius. May his unobtrusive originality continue to grow and advance and may he live to be a hundred.

Mr William Walsh is professor of commonwealth literature at the University of Leeds. He has written a tautological, didactic but thorough appreciation of R.K. Narayan. His work and life do not lend themselves to such formal, severe treatment. Perhaps, a lighter touch would have been more appropriate. Having said this, I should in fairness add that Prof. Walsh has written a sound and useful book. His knowledge of Narayan's work is impressive. The concluding paragraph of his book bears quoting in full. It throws up one or two fresh and illuminating insights.

"Narayan's fastidious art, blending exact realism, poetic myth, sadness, perception and gaiety, is without precedent in

literature in English and, as far as one can see, without following. It is kind but unsentimental, mocking but uncynical, profoundly Indian but distinctively individual. It fascinates by reason of the authenticity and attractiveness of its Indian setting, and engages because of the substantial human nature which it implies and embodies. It carries along with it at every point a kind of humour strange in English writing which mixes the melancholy and the amusing. Perhaps it is in this humour that there lies its deepest wisdom, which communicates a sense, crisp and unrebellious, of human limitation, and an appreciation, positively amiable but quite without illusion, of human achievement."

This is a handsome tribute, but R.K. Narayan would probably term it academic theorising. So let him have the last word on himself: "If one pauses to think one realises that there is little one could say about one's self."

Times of India, 1983

36. VIEW FROM MALGUDI

The Bachelor of Arts, The English Teacher, The Dark Room, The Mahabharat by R.K. Narayan.

U.N. Waiter: "Coffee, Sir."
R.K. Narayan: "Yes, please."
U.N. Waiter: "Black or White, Sir?"
R.K. Narayan: after a slight pause, "Brown".
Waiter nonplussed. I come to his rescue, "with milk and sugar."
"For three, Sir?"
I nod and ask R.K.N. why he is being so difficult.
"I am not being difficult. Coffee is brown, not black or white."

THIS MEMORABLE SCENE TOOK place at the Delegates Dining Room at U.N. Headquarters, New York on a clear autumn day in the early 1960s. It has an authentic Malgudi flavour.

Re-reading the three reissued novels has given me very great pleasure. Not many novels bear re-reading. Narayan's novels originally published nearly forty years ago have lost

none of their charm or liveliness or colour. His publishers deserve our congratulations for providing this R.K.N. feast.

India is grateful to Graham Greene for introducing R.K. Narayan's work to the world, by helping to find a British publisher for Swami and Friends in 1935. I am indebted to E.M. Forster, who a quarter of a century ago asked me "to read Narayan". Ever since I have been a devotee.

The little town of Malgudi on the banks of the gentle Sarayu river is now well established on the literary map of the world. So are the characters – Chandran of The Bachelor of Arts, Ramani and Mrs Shanta Bai of The Dark Room and the unforgettable Krishna and his wife Leela, who dies so young. But the two are able to communicate through a medium, eventually by themselves. Narayan is himself very highly psychic and The English Teacher is his most deeply-felt and autobiographical novel.

All these multi-dimensional figures even at their worst do not poison life. From time to time they suffer from a disease which might be called "ridiculitis". While cursing the outrageous nature of their situations and predicament, they have no desire to change the world. They are content if they leave it no worse than they found it. They slip out of life without too much fan-fare. Sorrow and joy, success and failure, love and its perils are all taken philosophically and with delightful light-heartedness. But a sense of tragedy saves them from degenerating into comic sceptics.

The world of Malgudi retains its sanity because those who inhabit it have attained a rare degree of inner achievement – the achievement of significance, of self-effacement, of a deep and lasting rapport with a small world. Like Krishna of The English Teacher Narayan has learnt to be on "good terms with oneself" or to put it in the words of Bernard de Fontenelle, the French philosopher – "etre bien avec soi".

R.K. Narayan is one of those writers who not only creates literature but re-affirms its relevance to every-day life, without resort to cheap literary gimmicks. What a relief to have an author whose creations are not made in the image of Jack the Ripper; who are not dypsomaniacs, sexual perverts and who don't get laid on the psychiatric couch every time "panic and emptiness" grip them. Narayan proves that it is

still possible to convey love and hate, anger and joy, sexual bliss and sexual frustration without resort to four letter words, and do so in simple, flowing prose.

His eleven novels are free of all isms. He is devoted to his art and a slave to no doctrine. Labels like progressive, committed have no meaning for him. Balance and detachment, yes. Assertive commitment to causes, no. All his life he has been a writer. Never has he given us anything second rate. The sources of his creative inspiration have not run dry. The Mahabharat is the latest proof of his genius. An epic of 100,000 verses, twice as long as The Iliad and The Odyssey put together is condensed to 176 pages with no essential ingredient missing. It is an extraordinary achievement in no way inferior to his Ramayana, the other great Hindu epic he gave us some time back. Adults and children will both find it equally rewarding. That is great writing for you.

This essay was inspired by admiration. It has ended in veneration. As Albert Camus said, "there is always something moving in the homage one man pays to another." I am happy to do so here.

The Financial Times, London, 1981

37. VISIONS OF COURTLY INDIA

Visions of Courtly India by W.G. Archer

DR. ARCHER'S LIFE WAS cut into two by the partition of India in August, 1947. He joined the Indian Civil Service in 1930 and was allotted to the State of Bihar. His job was to keep the natives in their place, to keep the flag flying and put the followers of Gandhi in jail every now and again. Being a Cambridge man, he was not terribly pucca and did take a wrong turning or two. He actually made friends with many Indians and got deeply interested in Indian miniature paintings.

On his return to England in 1948, he became Keeper Emeritus of the Indian Section of the Victoria & Albert Museum. In fact he became one of the most respected judges of the various schools of Indian miniature paintings. His books on the Punjab, Kangra and Garhwal schools put these places on the artistic map of the world. His wife, Mildred,

collaborated with him in his work. Visions of Courtly India is a catalogue of eighty Pahari (Hill) miniatures from their private selection. Each painting carries a scholarly and lively explanation. The paintings are a source of joy, delicate, sensual and romantic. Fact and fiction intermix with mythology and history. Some are startlingly daring, others display subdued passion but all invite attention. What can equal the elegance, the artistic defiance and arrogance of "The Lady and the Peacock", and of the colourful variety of "The Wedding Party Returns".

I have got more aesthetic pleasure from this volume than from most "modern"art exhibitions I have seen in the West. Nothing phoney or spurious here; only spontaneity combined with high artistic skill. If you are looking for a present to give, then get a copy of Visions of Courtly India.

Financial Times, 1977

38. PAHARI PAINTINGS AND SIKH PORTRAITS

Pahari Paintings and Sikh Portraits by F.S. Aijazuddin.

THE LAHORE MUSEUM HAS one of the best collections of Pahari (Hill) miniature paintings in the world. Rudyard Kipling's father J. Lockwood Kipling, was Curator of the Lahore Museum from 1870 to 1890. In 1922 a catalogue of the paintings was published. In 1947 the paintings were divided between India and Pakistan. Now Mr Aijazuddin, a direct descendent of Fakir Nuruddin, physician of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) and later Governor of Lahore, had produced a most magnificent book. The vast number of paintings have been carefully catalogued. Many lovely ones are reproduced. Seventeen out of the twenty-three Hill States are represented. Each painting receives the author's "scholarly and lively treatment." Dr Archer, perhaps the greatest living authority on Indian miniatures has identified a few of the masterpieces in the volume. India and Pakistan owe him a deep debt of gratitude. Mr Aijazuddin rightly says that, "without the Pahari painter, the Pahari States and their rulers might have been forgotten." Art came to the rescue of history.

Charming anecdotes prevent the book from becoming an academic exercise of use only to the expert and the art collector. Here is one. In 1837 Vigne, a British geographer, tried to draw the one-eyed Maharaja Ranjit Singh but without success. "Had I been obsequious enough to have given Ranjit two eyes, he would probably have made no objection; and when he did sit to me, he was constantly turning away, so as to conceal his blind side."

That a young Pakistani should take time out to bring out a volume of Hindu and Sikh paintings is yet another proof of the common history and heritage of the two countries. If international goodwill exists anywhere, "it is here, it is here" and most warmly do I congratulate Mr Aijazuddin for offering this feast to us. Art surmounts political divisions.

39. INDIAN MINIATURES

Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library by Toby Falk and Mildred Archer.

THIS IS THE SIXTH in a series of the India Office Library's collection of Indian miniatures and drawings. It is also the best, the most beautifully produced and the most expensive.

Astonishing as it may sound, work on the catalogue of Indian miniature collection began 55 years ago. Good intentions were not enough and little was done till 1939, when the Second World War broke out. After the war, or more accurately after the partition of India, that great authority on and patron of Indian Art, W.G. Archer (1907-79) revived the project. Unfortunately Bill Archer did not live to see the completion of the catalogue. His wife, Mildred Archer (another internationally well-known champion of Indian art) undertook to complete the work. It is appropriate that the completed work is dedicated to Dr W.G. Archer, who in this century did more than any one else to put Indian miniature painting on the art map of the world.

Mrs Archer has been helped in her work by Toby Falk. What a very successful collaboration it has been. Immense hard work must have gone into compiling so comprehensive

and detailed a reference work – for in the final analysis, this is what it is, the colour and black and white reproductions are an added bonus.

The origins of the India Office Library collection of Indian miniatures are worth recalling. As early as 1807, the East India Company bought 1100 miniatures from "Nabab Richard Johnson" (1753-1807). He spent twenty years in India as a writer in the Bengal Civil Service. He began by collecting manuscripts and ended up acquiring miniatures. His acquisitive methods were at times unorthodox. Occasionally, "seeking some favour, a petitioner may well have slipped a miniature to him before discussing official matters." Graft and art joined hands to enrich the harmless stock of human pleasure.

Over the years the India Office Library acquired miniatures of different schools, pre-eminent being the Dara Shikoh Album, which that lover of art and life gave to his wife, in 1642. Still later India Office Library supplemented the collection with paintings from Rajasthan, Punjab, the Simla Hill States (Pahari School), Central India, Bengal, Orissa and South India. The Mughal period dominates as it should. The Mughals were great patrons of art, but the Emperor Jahangir (1605-27), was also a discriminating expert, as is evident from the following passage from his memoirs. Royalty is permitted immodesty.

> As regards myself, my liking for painting and my practice in judging it have arrived at such a point that when any work is brought before me, either of deceased artists or of those of the present day, without the names being told to me, I say on the spur of the moment that it is the work of such and such a man. And if there be a picture containing many portraits, and each be the work of a different master, I can discover which face is the work of each of them....

No wonder the best miniatures were painted during his reign.

This collection is sensibly catalogued by School. First comes the Mughal School followed by the rest mentioned above. Each school gets a short introduction. In all cases the

introductions are informative and lively. That is not all, each picture is described and discussed.

So many of the reproductions are so exquisite that I had problems selecting a favourite. Just when I thought I liked best plate No. 34 in which the squirrels are having such a jolly time, my eyes caught the soft colours and contours (to say nothing of the lovely lady) of plate 426.

How fortunate that this catalogue was made available before the "Festival of India" is inaugurated in London by Mrs Indira Gandhi on 22 March 1982. Most of the miniatures reproduced here are likely to be on display for several months. Art lovers can get to know all about them from this superb and useful volume.

The Financial Times, 1982

40. THE INDIAN TIGER

Tiger: The Story of the Indian Tiger by Kailash Sankhala.

ALWAYS SOMETHING ORIGINAL OUT of India. Distinguished urine therapy is now followed by the "ritualised urination" of Mr Sankhala's tigers (p. 40).

Three years ago he gave us Tigerland, an excellent but limited pictorial survey of Indian wild life. His present book is a major work on the Indian tiger; more lively and better documented than Tiger Haven by Arjan Singh.

Mr Sankhala and I come from the state of Rajasthan. He spent a number of years in my home town — Bharatpur, where in 1805 Lord Lake threw away his fame. The town is now better known for its famous and much admired bird sanctuary. I have thus read his book with great interest and enjoyed it. I do not know him personally but he is obviously an "original" character, who has passionate feelings about the tiger and its preservation. His credentials are impressive. He has managed some of the best game parks and sanctuaries in India. As Director of the Delhi Zoo he made it world famous. He has done much to make India "wildlife" conscious. He is also an exceptionally good photographer as is clear from the superb photographs that adorn his book. It is not easy to photograph a wild tiger. Mr Sankhala has achieved the near impossible.

Mr Sankhala has written a readable, well-researched and informative book. He tells us that India is the only country in the world where the lion and the tiger are found together; that there are 2040 species of birds in India, compared to 2500 in the whole of Africa which is ten times the size of India; but tigers have a very inferior olfactory sense and are not particularly attracted by human smell but have a very sharp ear. He also has a sense of the ridiculous. While stalking wild animals with his camera, he builds himself a hide-out and spends many hours there. "Although my friends laugh at my doing so, I prefer to use a roll of toilet paper when writing notes. It provides continuity, and while writing I get a philosophical feeling as if I were preparing some one's horoscope on long rolls." He is a man of patience and courage and has spent long hours watching tigers in various moods. Their mating habits and love talk are both startling and amusing; "on the first day of oestrus the frequency of copulation is low, increasing on the third day to as many as 52 times" and to attract the attention of her lover a tigress calls out, "Aung oo oo ongh" or "Aooch aooch aooch aounch aoo." Alas! Mr Sankhala provides no translation!!

At the beginning of the 20th Century, there were about 40,000 tigers in India. By 1960 their number was down to 2500. In between an organised slaughter of the animal was in progress. Princes and Viceroys, British Generals and lesser fry all wanted to "bag" a tiger. They generally succeeded. The skin trade was lucrative. Thus something drastic had to be done to save the tiger. "Project Tiger" was launched in India in April 1973 with the backing and blessings of Mrs Indira Gandhi. Mr Sankhala was put in charge, and also awarded the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship to undertake a definitive study of the Indian tiger. Tiger shooting was banned. The skin trade was halted. Consequently the tiger population began to show a slow increase. Inevitably Mr Sankhala has his detractors. Some of his claims regarding the success of "Project Tiger" have been questioned; his methodology challenged, but there is no getting away from the fact that he was to some extent responsible for starting a serious national debate on the subject and worked hard to get a ban on tiger shooting. This is not an insignificant achievement.

His book will no doubt be a success. It deserves to be.

The Financial Times, 1979

41. AUTHORS AND BOOKS I READ IN 1977

IN 1977 MY READING was desultory and ill-organised. Fiction hit an all-time low. The one book in the area that engrossed me totally was le Carre's great spy story. The Honourable Schoolboy. As good if not better than The Day of the Jackal. It is melancholy to recall that Mr le Carre before taking up writing tried his hand at diplomacy. There is after all hope for us all! [The author is India's High Commissioner in Zambia.]

Anthony Sampson's The Arms Bazaar describes the growth of the giant armament companies, their deeds and misdeeds, their capacity to bribe and buy princes and prime ministers. Well researched and well documented, Bazaar is readable, gripping and profoundly disturbing. The "arms companies are masters of newspeak: that weapons should be called capabilities, deterrents or systems, that arms factories should be defence facilities, exports should be transfers, preparations for wars should be logistics and wars themselves should be conflicts." The new vocabulary consists of pay-offs, kick-backs, slush funds, con-men, fixers, agents, pedlars. Not only individuals but governments are bribed. Lockheed even bribed Prince Bernhard and Prime Minister Tanaka. Money not morality triumphs — not quite. The Prince and the Prime Minister did not finally get away because of the openness of American society which sooner or later exposes the abuses the system permits.

Pure Delight

Alistair Cooke's letter from America has given pleasure to millions of radio fans over the last three decades. His TV series on America was an unqualified success. His book, A Generation of Trial: USA v Alger Hiss made a lasting impression on me. I once had the pleasure of meeting him in New York and was bowled over by his charm, wit, sophistication

and sparkling personality. Mr Cooke's Six Men is pure delight. His Six Men are all from the top drawer—Charlie Chaplin, Edward VIII, H.L. Mencken, Humphrey Bogart (Democrat in politics, episcoplain by upbringing, dissenter by disposition), Adlai Stevenson and Bertrand Russell. This is a vastly enjoyable book, gently critical, human, personal. I only knew Adlai Stevenson—who would rather light a candle than curse the darkness. Six Men compares favourably with Roy Jenkins' Nine Men of Power and C.P. Snow's Variety of Men. It is not quite in the same class as Churchill's Great Contemporaries.

Kenneth Galbraith's The Age of Uncertainty has nothing uncertain about it. These television series for the BBC on the history of economic ideas has now been put into print. It is less successful than two previous attempts—Civilisation by Kenneth Clark and The Ascent of Man by J. Bronowski. Galbraith is not always profound but he is always provocative. And how well he writes, and how cocksure of himself he is! None of Sir Kenneth Clark's self-deprecation: "I think I know more or less what I am worth, it is not much, but it is something." He is witty and quotable: "The leader I knew best was Jawaharlal Nehru. We both had associations with the University of Cambridge. Once, when visiting the US, he expressed amused alarm over the number of Oxford men, William Fulbright, Dean Rusk, numerous others in high positions. I assured him that, as in India, the decisive posts were held by Cambridge men. He professed great relief."

V.S. Naipaul's India, A Wounded Civilisation I read with rage. One would have hoped that after a gap of thirteen years Mr Naipaul would have something more mature, calm and original to offer, some new blinding insights into Hinduism and Indian thought. He disappoints. His dazzling phrases shoot into the area of darkness, glow a moment or two, then come crashing down to the ground and are reduced to ash and dust. His book is littered with the debris of his fastidious and petulant outpourings.

Why Not His Heart?

He should let his passionate fluency serve his needs as a novelist, his imaginative vitality to expand and divert his high

intellect to some other purpose. Although he has taken a wrong turning, it is perhaps not too late for him to change course. He has approached India with his head, not with his heart. His heart, to quote E.M. Forster, is "undeveloped" and that will never do for Mother India.

Ved Mehta's Gandhi and his Apostles is the most original book on Gandhiji to appear since Erick Erikson's Gandhi's Truth (1969) which won the Pulitzer Prize. Ved Mehta takes a wrong turning or two but gets back to the main stream and provides an unusual portrait of the Mahatma and very candid ones of members of his supporting cast. Rajaji comes out as a champion. But the riddle remains. Was Gandhiji a saint among politicians or a politician among saints? Another important book on Mahatma Gandhi was Judith M. Brown's Gandhi and Civil Disobedience 1928-1934. Detailed, well researched, detached and devoid of academic sterility. She throws new light on British and Indian dilemmas. Gandhiji's high-minded idealism and hard-headed realism were needed to keep the freedom struggle on the right course. Dr Brown has tapped new sources and her book is a very worthwhile contribution to Gandhiana.

Martin Gilbert's Winston Churchill Vol. V 1922-1939 is a monument of high scholarship, awesome research and sound historical judgement—1,167 totally absorbing pages: Churchill in office 1924-1929; Churchill out of office 1929-1939; Churchill right on Hitler and the Nazis, wrong on Gandhi and India. On February 23, 1931, Churchill denounced the Gandhi-Irwin talks in words that have passed into history: "It is alarming and also nauseating to see Mr Gandhi, a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the viceregal palace, while he is still organising and conducting a defiant campaign of civil disobedience, to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor."

The naked fakir jibe did Gandhiji no harm, it did Churchill. Four years later Churchill in a conciliatory gesture invited Shri G.D. Birla to lunch at Chartwell. The meeting was a success. Churchill spoke of Gandhiji with warmth of feeling: "Mr Gandhi has gone very high in my estimation since he

stood up for the untouchables. I did not meet Mr Gandhi when he was in England (1931). It was then rather awkward. My son, though, met him. But I should like to meet him now. I would love to go to India before I die..." This was duly reported by Birlaji to the Mahatma who was duly touched. According to Mr Gilbert, Churchill and Gandhi did meet in London in 1908 but no record of that encounter exists. A thousand pities.

E.M. Forster's reputation is taking the customary dip following his death in 1970 at the age of 91. That is the fate of all great writers. Morgan Forster was also an exceptionally wise man. He selected P.N. Furbank to be his official biographer. The first volume, E.M. Forster: A Life—1879-1914, takes us through Forster's childhood, adolescence, Tombridge school, the golden Cambridge years, visits to Italy and India which meant so much to Forster. By 1910 Forster had published four successful novels including Howard's End. He was only 31. His homosexual novel, Maurice, he finished in 1913-14 and put aside. It was published after his death. Furbank's book is brilliantly written, well organised honest, subtle, sympathetic. Vol. II appears in the spring of 1978 a few months ahead of Morgan's centenary on January 1, 1979.

Long-Living Books

R.K. Karanjia's The Mind of a Monarch is a timely work and a solid contribution to Indo-Iranian relations. Karanjia is an unusually skilful writer. He captures the Shah's magnetic and engaging personality successfully. I wish the Editor of Blitz would devote more time to serious writing. His conversations with Nehru still read well almost two decades after their publication. Not many books live that long.

Two art books gave immense pleasure; W.G. Archer's Visions of Courtly India and Pahari Paintings and Sikh Portraits in the Lahore Museum by F.S. Aijazuddin. The former is a catalogue of eighty Pahari miniatures, all from the private collection of the Archers. Each painting carries a scholarly and lively commentary. The paintings are a source of joy; delicate, romantic, sensual, naughty. Fact and fiction intermix with history and mythology. Aijazuddin has also

produced an equally lovely book. He is a lineal descendent of Fakir Nuruddin, physician of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and later Governor of Lahore. Aijaz-uddin writes: "Without the Pahari painters, the Pahari states and their rulers might well have been forgotten." Art rescued history. That a Pakistani should spend so much time and labour on a project like this is most heartening. If international goodwill exists anywhere it is here and Aijazuddin deserves congratulations.

Finally Nirad Chaudhuri. He was 80 on November 23, 1977. I spent two afternoons with him this summer in Oxford and London. His mind is as active and powerful as it was when he was 50. There has been no depletion of the sources of his creative inspiration. His book on Hinduism comes out in 1978 and he has begun work on Vol II of his Autobiography.

In the past I have written harshly about him, but I have always admired his scholarship, his guts and his integrity. His reputation as an Anglophile is his own doing but he is more Indian than most of us. In his Autobiography he writes: "I have lived a part of the history of my country and my people in my own life and that has put me in sympathy with the entire process, so that my conception of Indian history is no longer purely external. I do not need to discover India by reading books, mostly in English by Englishmen... I have only to look within myself and contemplate my life to discover India; my intellect has indeed at last emancipated itself from my country, but by taking stock of all the rest I can say without the least suggestion of arrogance, L'Inde, c'est moi."

Many happy returns, Nirad Babu. May you continue to stir the Indian air so that we continue to breathe freely.

The Illustrated Weekly of India, 1977

PART THREE: LETTERS

1. LETTERS FROM C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

60 Bazlullah Road
Thyagarayanagar
Madras 17
October 27, 1962

My dear Natwar Singh,

I arrived here from Rome via Bombay and Delhi yesterday to receive a boisterous welcome at the air port in Madras. I shall never forget your kindness and your total surrender of your apartments to me. Convey to Swamy my heartfelt gratitude for all his attentions. I would not have returned well and hale and hearty but for his excellent service as my Nala and Bheema of the kitchen.

Yours sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari

Thyagarayanagar
January 6, 1963

My dear Natwar,

I wonder if you have really taken up the boring task of revising the translation of my stories and putting it on its legs, as I mercilessly suggested to you, instead of doing it myself as I should.

Anyway I send two stories rendered into English by someone else here which typescript will reach you by Second class Air Mail and one of which you may find easier to improve and use for your anthology.

Yours sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari

Thyagarayanagar
November 15, 1963

My dear Natwar Singh,

I have your letter of November 10. Surely you have a claim on me for anything. I am grateful to you for thinking to include me in your anthology. I don't remember the Dacca-man's story around my short story 'Ardanari'. However I shall send you two other short stories translated as soon as I am able to do so.

Yours affectionately,

C. Rajagopalachari

P.S. If I send you originals, I fear R.K. Narayan will find it heavy work and boring. C.R.

Thyagarayanagar
December 26 , 1963

My dear Natwar,

Thank you for your very kind letter. Do correct and improve the English of the stories sent to you. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan people had promised to me they would find a good translator but I find it is not done satisfactorily. If you can spare the time and finish the revision please send the *proofs straight to:*

Sri S. Ramakrishnan
Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan
Chowpatty Road, Bombay - 7

Of course you will choose one of these stories whichever you like for your anthology.

Best of New Years for you,

Yours sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari

Thayagarayanagar
January 12, 1964

My dear Natwar Singh,

I have your letter of January 7. I understand. I am glad you have sent a copy of your letter to Sri Ramakrishnan. I hope you have picked the story you want for your anthology and will put that right for inclusion.

My affectionate regards,

Yours sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari

Thayagarayanagar
January 21, 1964

My dear Natwar Singh,

I am glad you have taken over Hunchback Sundari. Perhaps it is a little overweighted with Upanishad talk. But as you say it is Indian and therefore suitable for an anthology.

I believe Jawaharlal Nehru will soon be well. He is not likely to overwork now.

Yours affectionately,

C. Rajagopalachari

Thyagarayanagar
February 28, 1964

My dear Natwar Singh,

Thank you for sending me your beautiful Forster book.* I have been glancing through it and also reading here and there. Of course I read all that you have contributed. Mr Forster is

*On 1.1.1964 E.M. Forster: A Tribute was published in New York. It was edited by me and the other contributors were Ahmed Ali, Mulk Raj Anand, Narayana Menon, Raja Rao, Santha Rama Rau. I sent Rajaji a copy and he obviously liked the book.

a fascinating person. Narayana Menon's contribution is first class. Of course the many quotations from Forster himself are entrancing.

Thank you for honouring me with this beautiful book and writing the words you have written on the flyleaf.

Yours sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari

Thyagarayanagar
August 21, 1965

My dear Natwar Singh,

It is some time since we exchanged letters. I trust you continue flourishing in the literary world in U.S.

I read Saturday Review, New York Times Weekly, Progressive (Madison, Wisconsin) U.S. Report and World News, and the picture I gather from columns, editorial comments and cartoons is that President L.B. Johnson has the worst press ever for a President or a Prime Minister anywhere in the world. I admire the way in which he has held himself up and goes on.

I am sure you will contribute your bit to welcome Mrs T. Sadasivam (M.S. Subbulakshmi) the illustrious singer who is going on invitation to the U.N. inauguration this year. You were so kind to me and my fellow delegates of the Gandhi Foundation when we were there. I can never forget your generosity and the beautiful food and attention I got in your apartments. Sri C.V. Narasimhan (of the U.N) will look after Mr and Mrs Sadasivam and their musical group.

Yours affectionately,

C. Rajagopalachari

Thyagarayanagar
August 31, 1965

My dear Natwar,

It was so good of you to write and write so promptly. I

have shown the letter to the Sadasivams and they are very grateful and look forward to meeting you.

I was glad to read what you write about President Johnson. It confirmed my own impression. But it is good to get a confirmation from one like you living in New York.

I have no influence on Fateh Singh. Even Tara Singh who is a very good friend would not listen to me if I asked him to give up any plan he had decided upon! I think something will be done by the Prime Minister to induce Fateh Singh to give up his fast.

Yours affectionately,

C. Rajagopalachari

C. Rajagopalachari
September 16, 1965

My dear Natwar Singh,

I was surprised to get a letter from you from Rajasthan and sorry to read the contents. My sincere condolences to all of you. I hope this letter will reach your hands before you leave for New York. God bless you.

There are fire-eaters in Delhi even in this decade who believe India is strong enough to govern border people by force of arms and maintain the Indian Economy for grand plans besides normal administration. Our P.M. is in the hands of two groups — one guiding his foreign policy, another his internal policy, he himself only concerned in winning the next elections for the Congress. It is a tragedy that 460 millions of people are placed under charge of people whose knowledge of diplomacy is disgracefully below requirements just when the world has shrunk into a single puzzle.

Yours affectionately,

C. Rajagopalachari

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI
NAOROJI ROAD
KILPAUK
MADRAS-10

March 6 66

60, BASULULLAH ROAD
TYAGARAYANAGAR
MADRAS-17

My dear Nahwar Singh

This is the first time I read your review of the Stevenson books in Saturday Review and Jam. I have become a regular literary figure of note in U.S. Good! And unlike our Indian authors who write 2nd & 3rd rate books for the U.S consumers, you write good stuff. Quite equal to what the best reviewers in the western journals write.

I noted your remarks about the striking difference between Gurkhas and reviewers' language — what you have so well described as the "triumph of literature over journalism." I used to feel this and enjoy it since long ago. When there was a Gurkha in my

Naoroji Road
Kilpauk
Madras 10
March 6, 1966

My dear Natwar Singh,

This is to tell you I read your review of the Stevenson books in Saturday Review in January. You have become a regular literary figure of the US. Good! And unlike our Indian authors who write 2nd and 3rd rate books for the US consumers, you write good stuff quite equal to what the best reviewers in the western journals write.

I noted your remarks about the striking difference between quotations and reviewers' language – what you have so well described as the "triumph of literature over journalisms". I used to feel this and enjoy it since long ago. When there was a quotation in any book of essays or other stuff from, say, Burke, or Goldsmith or Shakespeare or Bacon, the thing stood out like a Kanchanjunga or Everest Peak. "The triumph of literature over journalism" – Excellent phrase of yours. I congratulate you.

Best wishes,
Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
April 1, 1966

My dear Natwar Singh,

The enclosed letter was sent by me in the hope that the New York Times people would take it and forward it to Louis Fischer wherever he might be. But obviously the N.Y.T. people have other work to do!

Will you kindly take charge of this old letter and sent it to Fischer to his correct present address which I am sure you know or will be able to find out. Your last letter was very pleasant reading. My best wishes to you. I feel you should settle down and become an American, with fond memories of

India, unless the Government of India knows how to utilise your gifts and offers you a good place.

Yours sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
April 28, 1966

My dear Natwar,

Your letter of April 26 was just delivered by the postman to me. I am glad you are back in India. But it is an unreasoned feeling. Really you will find life in New Delhi dull and most unsatisfying. I hope you will retain your intellectual and cardiac spring in spite of it.

Before receiving your letter I had written a letter to you after reading your review of the Forster book by Wilfred Stone and addressed it to New York, but I am altering it to New Delhi now and enclosing it herein.

Louis Fischer got the letter and has written to me in his characteristic generous way. He was thrilled as you say and he writes he will cherish my praise as an accolade.

Yours affectionately,

C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
April 28, 1966

My dear Natwar,

I write after reading your review of Wilfred Stone's E.M. Foster book. You have become a complete American reviewer. If your name were not there (which by the way induced me to read it) I would have thought it was a native U.S.A. man who wrote it.

Reading your review led me to read the article next below. Philip Buaton's scathing indictment of Mamoulian's revised

Hamlet. I entirely agree with the condemnation. It seems most American scholars cannot enjoy or even understand Shakespeare. How are you? God bless you.

Yours affectionately,

C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
April 28, 1966

My dear Natwar,

When I wrote this morning that Americans seem mostly incapable of understanding Shakespeare, of course I must add there are quite a few exceptions: like John Ciardi who too I fear is not understood by most Americans. Look at for instance, his "Look, Kathy, look" in S.R. of Feb. 26. Do you think most Americans understand the subtle truth he has put into it as well as the tragedy of that truth being not generally perceived?

Yours affectionately

C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
May 14, 1966

My dear Natwar Singh,

Trust you have got reconciled to New Delhi between which and New York there is a whole world of difference. And particularly External Affairs atmosphere may be stifling.

I had a long meeting with the blind writer Ved Mehta who must be pretty well known to you. He filled the whole time with comprehensive questions he had ready, for me — all based on calumnies he had collected in advance!

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
May 20, 1966

Ny dear Natwar,

I have your letter of May 18. I was glad to read it. It confirmed my own impression of Ved Mehta. I had feared I was guilty of an unfavourable prejudice, but your letter has cleared my conscience.

I am glad you are with the P.M. I am getting to have a very good opinion of her. God bless her. I feel like a father – or grandfather – like to her.

Good luck to you.

Yours sincerely

C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
September 1, 1966

My dear Natwar Singh,

I am still running temperature. But I am looked after. Thank you for your enquiries. I was thinking of you yesterday. God bless you.

Yours affectionately,

C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
November 17, 1966

My dear Natwar Singh

Though still in bed I have not missed the Saturday Review's notice of "Tales from Modern India" the title of your anthology. The Reviewer has expressed his utter contempt for the dull pattern of all the stories and I can understand. His reaction is particularly violent against me. I trust you are

flourishing.

Yours sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari

P.S.: The American Reviewer does not know or does not keep in mind the fact that the Indian reading public has not the same training and certainly when I wrote Ardhanari did not have the training to read short stories of the higher sophisticated pattern. Even as it requires education to appreciate music, short fiction requires its readers to be educated, before it can change its pattern. This is only loud thinking.
C.R.

Kilpauk
November 24, 1966

My dear Natwar,

I was so glad to read your letter of November 22.

I shall indeed be very glad if you can get me the N.Y.T. review of your anthology. I have not yet received the copy of the book from the publishers. Sea mail takes more time.

I am not surprised you so much like the service under Smt. Indira Gandhi. She is splendidly endowed with all the graces of a good civilized lady. She grew up under the example of her gracious father.

I can never forget the moving gesture of her affection when she came and received my daughter at the Delhi railway station, (Mrs. Devadas Gandhi) when I took her to Delhi from Bombay after she unexpectedly and cruelly lost her husband. Indira Gandhi whom I did not expect was at the station and led my daughter to the car like a sister. The touch was a consolation both to her and to me. This was August 1957, when I had already begun openly and severely to criticise Jawaharlalji.

Yours sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
December 23, 1966

My dear Natwar,

I got the $ 21 from Macmillans of New York, some consolation for the biting criticism of Saturday Review suffered!

Hope you are flourishing. Frail Indira Gandhi is having a hard time. Who hasn't a hard time now in India, of one sort or another?

Yours sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
February 1, 1967

My dear Natwar Singh,

Your letter of January 27 about Mr Robert Bolt. I have no objection to help Mr Bolt to make money. But he must not come before the end of February and must preferably seek me out in the latter part of March next when I hope I shall still be in partial possession of my memory and not have lapsed into senility. God bless you.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
December 27, 1967

My dear Natwar,

Your kind letter of December 25. To speak the truth I was so absorbed in the non-cooperation programme and controversies of those days that I never read Forster's book. (1974) So I cannot reply to your questions. None of the people mentioned ever spoke to me about the book Passage to India.

Kindly send me the book. I shall return it.

Yours affectionately,

C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
January 9, 1968

My dear Natwar,

Thank you for your letter. It is interesting to note your collection of stories going round the world. No. Italy showed no interest in me except that good Pope John made me feel blessed. He was so kind to me in 1962. So he died soon after.

The Tamil stamp gained by the incident as you write. Things work in paradoxes in this muddled world.

I finished 89 in December 1967 and I am running 90.

About the I.C.S. people, my experience was that the Englishmen were on the whole better than the Brown people, who suffered from an inferiority complex and overdid their arrogance.

Yours sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
January 20, 1968

My dear Natwar,

In spite of my very deteriorated eyesight, owing to lenticular as well as vitreous opacity, because you wrote about E.M. Forster's Passage to India, I read his short stories and his Passage, and completed the latter book today.

I have a feeling Forster is one of Dequincey's tribe — an opium eater genius. This is my fancy or notion based on the extremely subjective manner of his writing. This is the first time I read this eminent writer. Of his short stories, I liked two. A Passage to India I plodded through though the book

has quite a lot of heavy idealized natural descriptions which with this writer is a mannerism, E.M. Forster is a liberal, one of the many British liberals who hold that the mistake of the British regime was only the arrogance of the officials. In Forster's book the Englishman and woman come off best, the Musulman next best, the Hindu who is really detested — his social customs and his religious practices — all included, comes off worst.

Without the Englishman, India under the Hindus will go to rack and ruin, that was what E.M. Forster, his hero Fielding, and Englishmen were sure of. Perhaps it has proved true!

Yours sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari

Kilpauk
March 25, 1968

My dear Natwar Singh,

I am sorry about your wife's illness. I hope you will see her well soon.

I have firmly resolved not to write or dictate any recollections or autobiography.

Yours affectionately,

C. Rajagopalachari

Naoroji Road
Chetput
Madras 31
September 19, 1969

My dear Natwar Singh,

Your letter dated 15-9-69. I thought I could get at the Hindustan Times issues referred to in your letter easily here and so did not reply to you at once. But I have found more difficulty in getting at the issues than I had anticipated. But

I think I shall have them all in a day or two.

Yours sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari

2. LETTERS FROM E.M. FORSTER

Kings College,
Cambridge
March 16, 1954

Dear Mr Natwar Singh,

Thank you for sending me Mr Thakar's plays. They are both fanciful and thoughtful. I should think the first one might be effective on the stage. The second one is rather static and it challenges certain comparisons with Animal Farm which it cannot sustain, but it should be quite an entertaining drama for school boy actors and audiences. I don't find either play very satisfactory philosophically, but this may be because what little philosophy I have in me is westernised.

I can't get a copy of Hindu Holiday either. I cannot even find my own! I am ordering one, and when it arrives I shall be very pleased to lend it to you.

With all good wishes, and with thanks.

Yours sincerely,

E.M. Forster

Cambridge
June 20, 1954

Dear Natwar,

Dinner on Friday the 23rd would be delightful and I will come along at 7.30 to 8.00 unless I hear to the contrary. So get going with your Batterie de Cuisine. I do not know when I come up and will easily find my way to you. Thank you very much. It will be very nice seeing you again.

With love,

Yours

E.M. Forster

Cambridge
August 21, 1954

Dear Natwar,

This is news indeed, and indeed sad news. I am here all this week and more or less free until Friday. Could you come up to lunch on Wednesday. Failing that, what do you suggest.

I returned here yesterday – motored in two days and a bit from Bayreuth to Boulogne and feel a little dazed but very well.

With love and hoping to hear your plans soon,

Morgan

October 6, 1954

My dear Natwar,

Thank you for your p.c., your letter, and the photograph of us. The last has only just arrived for Stearns have been most dilatory and muddling. I called for it today and told them to forward the two other copies to you, by surface-mail. The next thing is a ring for me (in my absence) saying that they have lost your address. I am giving it tomorrow and the copies shall reach you – in? Ten days? There abouts anyhow. Let me know if they don't come.

I hope you will approve of my choice between the proofs, but there really was no choice. The full face one was awful – we looked like a couple of frying pans. The profiles (which you will receive) at any rate suggest human beings. I am looking at you and you are looking away from me. Rather unreciprocal and I wish we had been able to get taken at the K.P. Shop. Stearns is too much on mass-production lines.

I was interested on your experiences on the boat. The world is pretty frightening isn't it. One comes out of one's own little corner expecting the world to bear some resemblance to it, and lo! Tea Planters and their wives.

I have noted the books you mention. Ian Stephens has just lent me a novel by a man called Masters. It is not attractive but deals with a subject that interests me. Mixture of races.

Please write again and tell me how you are and you are

getting down. I am very well myself.
With love,

Yours affectionately,

E.M. Forster

December 6, 1954

Dear Natwar,

It was nice to hear from you, but really the photographers are incredible. I have been at them twice, on one occasion repeating your address which they had lost and I don't think I can do any more – they only gape.

I suggest your writing severely to them, registering your letter, and quoting the number which is pencilled on my own copy: S3645A. If you still cannot get a reply from them then I suppose I shall have to give you my copy, but I shall not do so with any pleasure as I like it. Their address: Stearn And Sons Photographers, Sidney Street, Cambridge.

Thank you for the Christmas Card. I am not sending any this year, only bits of paper like this: but it brings my love and best wishes for your happiness. You sound to be having an excellent time. How I wish I was a cultural Chinese to go with you on that tour.

I have not much news. I have just been to a feast at New College Oxford, and was deeply impressed by the gravity and dignity of the College and of its architecture. King's looked a bit too ostentatious when I returned. "Look at me, Royal." New College did not mind whether one looked or not.

I have finished or almost finished Bhawani Junction: I shall never finish it quite as the Colonel's copulations became too much or rather too many for me. All right if he wants to yes. But why must she there? The railway, the people, rail loyalty, Anglo-Indianism – all that was excellent and India should welcome it, though might find it difficult to do so. My chief sub-continental pleasure has however been Stella Kramrisch's book on Indian Art.

Well goodbye for the present Natwar and please write again. I have seen a little of Hutheesingh this term. What a

nice chap he is!

With love and hoping to see you again before too long.

Morgan

Cambridge
April 1, 1955

My dear Natwar,

I am a shocker over writing. Even now I haven't told you how much I liked the thing about me, and even now I don't return it for it has got hidden under something or other in this all too capacious apartment. I trust you have a copy. In any case I will hunt for it again. It is here and it did give me great pleasure.

Now I get your line about Mr Chaudhuri. I had a letter from the British Council earlier in the day. They suggested our meeting, and I replied to them that if he cared to write to me direct I should hope to fix something. It's up to him to write, I think, after the way he snubbed my poor Aziz. They tell me he has been invited over here by the B.B.C. to collect material for broadcasts.

Everything here is all right except the weather. East wind all day and frost most nights. I keep well and am beginning to see the end of my work. Until its back is broken I don't feel inclined to go abroad, though the French opportunities have offered themselves. An old friend of mine, Ahmed Ali has been over from Karachi, and since last I saw him he has become an expert on China. One result of this is that he has given me a sung saucer.

Well I must finish this chatter and go to bed. I recently spent a very pleasant evening with Hutheesingh. Have also met Mrs Pandit and was quite bowled over of course. And — finally — I have just been to the Boat Race.

With love,

Yours

E.M. Forster

June 30
1955

My dear Nation
Your merited reprimand caused [illegible] Love, and here is [illegible] – no doubt he left it merit thanks. Sorry: but it is dangerous to send people of my age anything which it is hoped to see back again.

I liked Mr Chandhuri – thought him so first-hand, and it was remarkable how much and how seriously he was enjoying English 18th century home. He [illegible] of Domenico Veneziano, etc. Now there is another excellent – a novelist called Mr Pendse, who had never travelled [illegible] Bombay, and is now under the Rockefeller Found. ation. What do you think of him? – for I expect you know all about him. I am Stephens and I liked him very much, and I find his novel – bizarre, [illegible] and half [illegible] The Sky is the Limit – very moving and entirely free of "-isms." I wish I could sell it to a publisher in this country. There was also the one of a third Indian – name forgotten and something very much the Good Boy – who failed to reach Cambridge because of the Strike. – And my official friend Ali has been over from Karachi. –

There [illegible] my son-contributed news. Corry means

Cambridge

June 30, 1955

My dear Natwar,

Your merited reprimand caused further frantic search here, and here is your article ....but it is dangerous to send people of my age anything which it is hoped to see back again.

I liked Mr Chaudhuri – thought him so first hand and it was remarkable how much and how genuinely he was enjoying English 18th century, homes, the pictures of Domenico Veneziano. Now there is another excitement – a novelist called Mr Pendse, who had never travelled farther than Bombay and is here under the Rockefeller Foundation. What do you think of him? For I expect you know all about him. Ian Stephen and I liked him very much, and I find his novel – translated and badly translated as "The Sky is the Limit" – very moving and entirely free of "isms". I wish I could help it to a publisher in this country. There was also to be a third Indian – name forgotten and somehow very much the Good Boy – who failed to reach Cambridge because of the strike – And my old friend Ahmed Ali has been over from Karachi.

That concludes my sub-continental news. Coming nearer home. I have had an attack of gout. – a distinguished ailment but I wish it had not selected the Aldebourgh Festival. I did not let it hold me back, but attended concerts, opera, mystery plays and cocktail parties with one foot in a khaki coloured slipper, and was dragged down to the sea on my back on a mackintoshed rug, leaving a deep furrow in the shingle. It is better now. I hope to remain at Cambridge for the next six weeks, and then have a fortnight's motoring in France.

I do hope that your eyes are giving no more trouble and that life is now all right with you generally.

With love,

Yours

E.M.F.

I am trying to finish off my great .....book, and hope I may do so by the autumn. Until it is off my chest I would rather not read any more. MS — so please excuse me to your late teacher. E.M.F.

December 27, 1955

Dear Natwar,

Just an unornamented Christmas and New Year Card to wish you all happiness in both. I am spending both events in Coventry — then via Cambridge to Aldebourgh. I was glad to get your letter, with its fascinating glimpses of your visitors. I do not wonder that the Russians have won the stakes. They give India help of the type that was refused by Europe, and they profit by Europe's suicidal racial arrogance. In time they too will develop racialism, but — though there are already signs of it — the time is not yet.

The review of Malhotra pleased me rather than not. Why did you think so badly of it? As I have fared much worse in the past, both orientally and occidentally — I never like to refuse interviews connected with India either; my heart in this direction is too tender. Last week it was a Mr Jyoti — with a numerous schedule of questions about mysticism. Let us see what Mr Jyoti produces.

With all the best for 1956,

Morgan

July 11, 1956

Dear Natwar,

Do you remember my once saying that I gave a short address at a meeting in the union, after Mahatma Gandhi's murder? Some copies of the text have just turned up. I should like to send you one, if I may. It is a little expression of what I felt at the time, and indeed still feel.

I have mislaid your last letter. I was so very sorry to hear of your sad family news in it, and I had intended to write before.

I have kept well, my book is out (biography of an aunt: the sort of subject the English are willing to spend much time over), and I have been to Greece. We spent a charming day on Santori, and are distressed by the tragic news. It did look a fantastic and insecure place. The water was too deep for anchorage, and the boat had to lie on the walls of the crater and keep the engines going to toughen the ropes. The Greeks were all charming, particularly our own Greek friends. It was not like the newspapers at all. What indeed is?

Friends of Natwar's look in from time to time. Some of them, I suspect, know him better than do others. There has been a very pleasant intelligent Singh at Trinity – I forget his initials: training for the Foreign Service, I think he talked most interestingly about Indian painting, and has told me the subject of a little miniature which I possess and which I have never interpreted.

The International P.E.N. Conference is in progress in London, I have behaved rather shamefully, but go up to it tomorrow and on Saturday entertain about 20 members to tea here. (Sardar Panikkar should have been member of Honour for India, but according to the latest rumour he has popped off to Poland, leaving disgruntlement behind him.)

Well I will conclude now, with love, and with the hope of my soon seeing you again.

Morgan

I saw much of Harsha towards the end of his time here; much to my pleasure.

K.C.C.
October 19, 1956

My dear Natwar,

What a lovely gift and how kind of Dr Bredsdorff to convey it. He could not stay long, but gave me little news of you, and I gathered from it and from your letter that Pekin is not too bad, and any how interesting. 'A hundred schools of thought' is a cheering edict. Unfortunately there is always the 101st.

There are two schools of thought only about your scroll. Dr Bredsdorff maintained it should be hung horizontally. I surely am right in upholding it perpendicular and I shall do so pending your ruling to the contrary. We sought a third opinion from the birds, as to which way they would prefer their heads to hang, but they didn't seem to mind.

I have just been to the Russian Ballet, and found it well upto its fame. I have also — a quieter experience — passed a week in Holland amidst dykes and lakes and I saw the remarkable Rembrandt Exhibition.

Well I must end now and I hope and I hope readably, for I lost my pen on the boat and lack the energy to buy a new one.

With love and thanking you most warmly for the delightful present.

Yours ever,

Morgan Forster

December 3, 1956

My dear Natwar,

Your bounties crowd upon me. On the heels of two charming little birds, swaying gracefully on their branch arrive four magnificent dragons. Mr Nehru was most kind to deliver them, and I have seen him since, and I have also seen Mr Gokhale. Each of them was able to give me a little news of you, and I hope that you are keeping fairly well and cheerful, considering the sad family loss that you have undergone.

I keep all right myself — considering my age and the state of the world.

With love and all kind greetings for Christmas and the New Year and with my thanks,

Yours ever,

E.M. Forster

December 20, 1956

My dear Natwar,

Affectionate Christmas greetings and did I thank you for the sumptuous embroidered dragons? I can't be sure, I know I thanked you for the delicate little birds on whose heels they had followed. It is most kind and generous of you.

Like most people, I am pretty gloomy in the days. So will stop. Gloomers are bores. I am off to the midlands for Christmas, back in the New Year to go to Britten's new opera at Convent Garden.

With love and again thanks for your generous and acceptable gifts.

Yours ever,

E.M. Forster

January 1, 1957

Dear Natwar,

How sweet of you to remember my birthday! I send you a line of greeting on it for 1957. We all need each other's greetings for the world is in a strange state, and the things I have always thought valuable are not only ignored in China but deprecated in this country. I expect that a few islets in Cambridge and elsewhere will remain uncovered for longer than I shall, so I don't worry personally which is in all circumstances a mistake. Still when I reflect what the human race might do and feel, and observe what people do and how they don't feel, I naturally get depressed.

I am sorry to hear of your throat and hope it has cleared up permanently. I am all right myself. I am in Coventry for the moment and go tomorrow to London (shortly to be renamed Londong) to see Britten's new ballet. Then to Cambridge. Yes, Ravi Shankar was marvellous, so was the tabla boy. They came to Cambridge, too, but all went there most vexatious. I was laid up and couldn't go, and the wretched secretary did absolutely nothing until the last minute. I had actually to write to London to find out where

tickets could be got. Consequently the big room in the union was almost empty, and the people who would have filled it either didn't know or were engaged and have in either case since been tearing their hair. Nothing enrages me like an insult to a great artist coupled with a deprivation to the public, and for that reason I shall end this letter by giving the secretary's name: M.V. Das of Queens.

It will indeed be nice if you got over to this country before long. Meanwhile, every good wish and love.

E.M. Forster

May 2, 1957

My dear Natwar,

I was greatly touched by your letters, and by their proof of your affection for me. Yes – I am a good age by this time, and life is uncertain for me, as of course it is for every one. But it is a great consolation to know, while one is still alive, that one is liked and valued, and the mistake about my death has procured me this. The novelist, Joyce Carey, died the day you heard the rumour and I thought there might have some confusion between us: but you say the man's name was actually Forster; there was a classical scholar of the name, I know.

Your accounts of the spoil-sport state fascinate me. When I try to conjecture the immediate future of this energetic planet, I am divided between interest and gloom. All the values I appreciate are disappearing and I don't want to outlive them: at the same time it has been fascinating to watch the growth of man's physical powers during the past half-century – after millards of preparation during which so little changed.

Oh dear – I did not mean to write a letter like this, or quite like it. I am going to Austria next month for a fortnight. This is my proximate festivity, with two friends I fly to Zurich: then train to Innsbruck, Salzburg and Linz: thence down the Danube to Vienna whence we fly back to London.

I like your unshaven photograph so much and it is on the market stall. Thanks also for the one with Mrs Hutheesing.

I miss Harsha. Also you! The Indian I see most of is a Maratha, who is apprenticed at Pye's, and knows a great deal about music.

I am writing in London actually. I have been to the R.A. Banquet, and am still sleepy from it. Much love and I should think you now might achieve calling me Morgan.

March 31, 1959

My dear Natwar,

A line – which ought to have come before, but advancing years make one slack – to thank you for your good and seasonable wishes, also for your nice article on me: though am I all that shy? My birthday festivities went well, and I enjoyed them, and they ended in quite a magnificent concert given by the College Musical Society. I keep very good health for my age, and I hope you do for yours.

I have just finished B. Rajan's "The Dark Dancer." What do you think of it? I am much impressed. I have also seen a proof copy of Chaudhuri's – Passage to England. What a talented but spikey chap he is? He actually goes out of his way to warn us British against the myth of Indo-British friendship which I do think is a bit much. I must try to find out something more about him, apart from what he himself tells.

Harsha is out of College and working hard I fancy – anyhow I don't see as much of him as I should like. Mrs Pandit has passed with benignity. There has been some good Indian music. And I have tried to talk to the Cambridge Majlis, but the exigencies of influenza have compelled us to postpone till next term.

Oh yes, and Mahalenobis of Calcutta has become Hon. Fellow of King's College – that's all the strictly or semi-strictly Indian news that I can think of, so I will now conclude with my love.

Yours ever

E.M. Forster

Cambridge
August 9, 1961

My dear Natwar,

I am so pleased to hear from you, and to know that you have got through your operation. I have had troubles too, and I too have got through them. This is just to say that I shall be in Cambridge on exactly August 20th and I hope that there will be an opportunity of seeing you, if only for a moment. A few days later I am off to France.

With best love and what a nice letter.

Morgan

November 21, 1961

My dear Natwar,

Thank you for your nice letters and photographs of myself. The one you took of mine in a red tie is superb. The one of me with an oriental animal was taken by Moshin Ali, now in Reuters, and strangely enough I heard from him recently.

Santha Ram Rau seems doing marvels over Passage to Broadway and I have also had an encouraging talk with its producer over here. You urge me to come over for the opening performance and also to take care of myself. I wish one could combine these incompatibles.

With affectionate remembrances,

Morgan

PS: It is unfortunate about your friend, J. Ivory. All was fixed for his visit but I went down with influenza and I had to write and put them off — he was bringing friends.

May 1, 1963

My dear Natwar,

What an agreeable idea, and may I be here in 1964 the more fully to appreciate it. It would be excellent to include,

with a covering word, my words about Gandhiji for I don't think they are widely known.

My Hyderabad friends would be interested, particularly those connected with the "Urdu House" there – I sent a donation to it from my takings of the "Passage" performance in New York – And speaking of Hyderabad a book on me has been written by a Dr V.A. Shahane who is professor of English in the Osmania University there. I am delighted with it – one of the best studies on me, I thought, and very well informed. Do have a look at it if it comes your way – published by Kitab Mahal, Lahore, if my memory serves – I haven't a copy to hand.

I keep fairly well thanks and look forward to a play on "Where Angels Fear to Tread", which goes on here at the end of the month. Dramatised by Mrs Elizabeth Hart (American) I think she has done it very well. Bryan Shaw produces it.

I hope that you too keep well.

with love

Yours ever

E.M. Forster

My kindest remembrances to Santha Rama Rau when you see her.

Cambridge
June 17, 1963

Dear Natwar,

I received your kind letter on my return from France – a particularly agreeable France.

I don't think I ought to edit a tribute to myself – or indeed to contribute to it except by my long-ago tribute to Gandhiji which I am very glad should appear.

So I am not reading what Mulk writes about me.

I have not heard from H.B. of this pleasant project and do not see why I should. I am not interested, (here) in that side of the thing. It has my affectionate approval and I shall be glad if it contains an element of surprise. Tell them not to

send me any contracts. I require no payment for the Gandhi speech or for anything else. I should feel it unseemingly.

Yours ever,

Morgan

Cambridge
July 11, 1963

Dear Natwar,

I have just received your wire. Yes – what a melancholy muddle. I fear the Wilcoxes win any way. However, let us see what can be done. My present position is

i) I cannot sign a contract.
ii) I cannot write a foreword.
iii) Concession. I am now willing to allow extracts from my published works relating to India to be included. This should swell the book up to a saleable bulk besides providing addition of advertising matter.
iv) Recapitulation. I accept no payment and claim no copyright.

I write off at once, in the hope of facilitating your negotiations with Harcourt Brace.

Yours ever,

Morgan

We have now had our telephone talk. It will be better not to attempt it again as I have no phone in my room, and much running about on the part of porters is involved.

Cambridge
July 16, 1963

Dear Natwar,

I could scarcely refuse to read your Tribute when you asked me to do so, and I have read it with much pleasure. I

expect to do the same with the others when the time comes and I shall then write separately to all who have paid me this honour.

To turn to the less pleasant subject of your Harcourt contract, I hope that my "concession" has arrived and been helpful. I must now ask you not to refer any further business troubles to me. I cannot assist you over them for the reason that I have already given all the help that is in my power.

With every good wish,

Yours ever,

Morgan

Cambridge
August 10, 1963

Dear Natwar,

I am afraid that the title you mentioned (Only Connect) does not seem to me appropriate to this type of book and I have informed Harcourt Brace accordingly. The book is an offering from writers to a writer and I wish this to come out clearly in its title. "Tribute to E.M. Forster" is the sort of thing.

With all good wishes and much appreciation of the trouble you have taken,

Yours ever,

Morgan

Cambridge
August 21, 1963

My dear Natwar,

Thank you for your letter of the 14th. I was so sorry not to accept Only Connect, which as a title is effective but unsuited to this particular book. Your alternative of E.M. Forster – a Tribute from India is exactly right, but for the

omission of Pakistan. Ahmed Ali, as you say, must be considered – indeed it is generous of him to come in. Do you think it might be possible to put on the title page (not of course on the exterior of the book) something like:

E.M. Forster – A Tribute
from friends in India and in Pakistan?

If you do, perhaps you would discuss it with the publishers.

I am so glad you like Shahane's book. I haven't read that particular James Baldwin yet. Fascinating colour-news about the U.N.

With love and thanks for all the trouble you have taken:

Morgan

December 20, 1963

Dear Natwar,

The advance copy has just arrived and could'nt have done so at a time more convenient to me. For I am just off for a fortnight, and read the other contributions and can write to the other contributors while I am away. I am much pleased with the appearance of the book, and with the editing. The selection from my own writing looks excellent and must have meant a great deal of work. Many of my own remarks about India I had quite forgotten.

I must stop now and consider packing and a journey through cold weather.

With love and renewed thanks.

Yours ever,

Morgan

I liked your contribution as I said.

December 31, 1963

My dear Natwar,

I have now written to all the others* and before midnight strikes there shall be this renewed line of gratitude to you. What a splendid piece of work — the contributions so welcome and the "anthology" so sensitively and intelligently chosen and marshalled with such skill. The publishers, too come out so well.

A happy New Year to you shall attend my thanks. And I note with pleasure that Mr Faubion Bowers, whom I met over here, has accorded assistance. Please convey my appreciation to him.

With love and most sincere thanks.

Morgan

*Mulk Raj Anand, Ahmed Ali, Narayana Menon, Raja Rao and Santha Rama Rau.

3. LETTERS FROM PERCIVAL SPEAR

CB 3 9JH
May 7, 1981

Dear Mr Natwar Singh,

I've just received from the publisher George Allen and Unwin, a copy of your book **Maharaja Suraj Mal 1707-63.** I've no doubt it was sent on your instructions, and I should like to thank you very much for this generous and valuable gift.

I've only had time to glance through the book and read a passage here and there, but it already appears to me to be a solid work, based on much research and an intimate knowledge of a tumultuous period of North Indian History in the 18th century.

One has heard so much of the depredation and raids of the Jats narrated and experienced by others; but here we have a view of the same Delhi-Agra region from within the Jat camp itself as it were. How far could Suraj have gone but for his untimely end, and could he have been as constructive in peace as he was skilful in war! I particularly like your tables and appendices which fill many odd historical corners often overlooked by historians. One suggestion: In your next edition, would you include a chapter on Suraj's cultural activity and legacy – his buildings, his gardens (like Dig), his patronage of learning and art?

Thanking you again and with all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Percival Spear

29 Owlstone Road
Cambridge CB 3 9 JH
U.K.
May 28, 1981

Dear Mr Natwar Singh,

Very many thanks for your charming letter of May 17th last. I must apologise for appearing uninterested on that Centenary Day on February 1st last. After the actual function I spent two hours greeting and being greeted by old and new friends and I'm afraid that as time went on I became somewhat bemused as to who was who! I knew your name but did not quite connect you and this the book has done for me. Please concentrate on my letter of May 7th and not on my dazed condition after the function on February 1st!

I'm sorry I didn't get to know you more in 1951-53 at Cambridge. That was the year The Twilight of the Mughals was published by the University Press here, which first made my reputation, (such as it is) in the modern Indian historical field.

Yes, yes, – by all means quote anything you wish from my letter of May 7th.

You hold now what I imagine to be one of the most responsible and difficult diplomatic posts in the Indian diplomatic service. All good wishes to you in your onerous task.

I'm delighted to have made – or remade – this contact with you.

With all good wishes,

Percival Spear

T.G.P. Spear

4. LETTERS FROM NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI

Tel. 24768

P.O. Buildings
Nicholson Road
Delhi 6
February 17, 1955

Dear Mr Natwar Singh,

I am sending you a copy of the Statesman of Feb. 7, '54 in which the article on Dig appeared. My second son, who wrote it, was 19 years 4 months old at the time. The first son illustrated it with his photographs. We have quite a number of photographs of Dig, both in colour and black and white. If you are interested you can come and see them on any day convenient to you. You may ring me up at the telephone no. given above either before 8.30 a.m. or after 7.30 p.m.

The boy would, however, like to have the article back, as it is one of two copies he has, and usually keeps for file.

It was a great pleasure to meet you, in spite of our different estimates of A Passage to India. I am now engaged in a study of Indo-Islamic architecture in the Delhi-Agra region, and hope to do more work on Dig with your help. The book I want is Sujan Charitra by Sudan (Benaras Nagari Pracharani Sabha) 2nd edition.

Yours sincerely

Nirad Chaudhuri

Nicholson Road
August 3, 1955

Dear Mr Natwar Singh,

I was very glad to have your letter, which reached me only yesterday (the 2nd), although it bears the date 29th.

I have been wanting to get in touch with you, but the heat had completely knocked me out, and I had been neglecting

not only social duties but also my writing engagements.

I think your idea of meeting sometime next week is excellent. But if you want to hear about my experiences and see the menus among other things, would it not be better to come over to my place, and have tea (afternoon or high, as you please) with us? Why not come over on Sunday? Or alternatively any other evening. Please let me know how you would like it to be arranged, and, of course, if you want to you may bring along a friend or two.

Mr Forster and I had a very interesting conversation, and he was very kind and courteous. Hoping to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,
Nirad Chaudhuri

Nicholson Road,
February 15, 1960

My dear Natwar Singh,

I am enclosing two invitation cards to Dhruva's photographic exhibition: one for you and the other for your friend Mr Shankar Menon (K.P.S.'s son – I hope I am right). I have sent an invitation to your other friend Menon by post, and given another to Shiamsunder Nath by hand.

As I do not know Mr Shankar Menon's address will you kindly send it on to him?

I am also sending a hand-drawn poster, for display (if possible, and if possible only with propriety on your part) at the Gymkhana Club. If not keep it with you for the present, and I shall bring it away later. If displayed, take it back to your room after the exhibition is over, for we should like to preserve it.

Of course, I am expecting you and your friends to come.

Yours sincerely,

Nirad Chaudhuri

41 Harefields, Oxford
OXZ 8NS
January 12, 1978

My dear Natwar Singh,

Thank you very much for your letter and for the proof-copy of your piece on me. I found it very interesting, and what you have written about E.M.F.'s review of my Passage justifies my poor opinion of his character. He aired condescension towards it, which showed what a fool he was. But he was trying to square his account with me.

I follow different principles. I have an article ready pointing out what a poor novel his Passage was apart from its shoddy theme. It was full of howlers about Indian life. He made a Sudra the brother-in-law of a Brahmin (both Bengali) and gave the name of Amrit Rao to a Bengali barrister from Calcutta. But I never tried to publish it, because I hold that if I have had personal relations of a satisfactory character with a man, I do not criticize him unless it is a matter of duty.

Even when it is a duty, I do not criticize anyone if people might think that I have a personal reason to write unfavourably. The New York Review of Books offered me $ 500.00 to write a review of Ved Mehta's book on India. Since he was blind that book could not be authentic. But I told the Editor that since V.M. had spread calumnies (all falsehoods) about me in this book, people might misunderstand me.

I cannot understand how you could write favourably about his book on Gandhi. What can a potboiler (efficient) writing for an American Public (who will never buy a book on India, which is authentic) — and a Punjabi at that, understand about Gandhi — especially about his sexual obsession G.'s sexuality is not to be understood in terms of the Kinsey Report, or the Psychopathia Sexualis. Hindu sexuality is of a brand which is its own. When you read my book on Hinduism, you will get a glimpse of its real character and be startled. Do you want an advance proof copy to read? If so, let me know if I can send it to you through the High Commission here. Though you come from Brij, you do not know what Krishna of Brij is.

You want to know what I think of Amita Malik's piece on

me in the T. of I. Well, I am certainly flattered, but I also know that what others write about me must be their image of me. I have a readymade formula to embody my view of other people's view of me. I am often asked: "We hear so many stories about you. Are they true?" I reply, "If they are for me, you should discount 95%, but if against the whole 100%."

Give my good wishes as well as my wife's to your wife. I hope she is not finding Lusaka dull after London. In any case, when she is bored with a Jat 'Singh', she might cultivate a real African 'Singh'. How are the children. We are well. With love,

Yours very sincerely,

Nirad C. Chaudhuri

Oxford,
March 7, 1978

My dear Natwar Singh,

When your instructions about sending you the proofs of my book on Hinduism came it had not even gone to press. It was sent last month, and I am afraid I cannot expect the proofs to come before April or May. Let me know how I can send a bound copy to you conveniently. In the meanwhile, the TLS has published a long extract (7000 words) from the introduction, which gives my general appraisement in rational terms of the character of Hinduism as a religion. There are, of course, many other things in the book. I wonder if you see the TLS. As the issue for Feb. 3 was a special Indian issue you may at least have seen it. You may have also heard about it.

Today I am writing with a self-seeking purpose, actually for my eldest son Dhruva. He works at present as Professor in the Institute of Mass Communications in Delhi. He is not very happy there, because he feels he has little opportunity to do artistic work there, being burdened with routine work. So he has applied for the post of lecturer in photography at the Evelyn Home college of Commerce and Applied Arts at Lusaka under the Dept. of Education and Vocational

Training of the Govt. of Zambia. He has given as reference a Zambian and Mr Ashok Mitra (formerly of the I.C.S.). He did not know about you, and I am asking on my own if you could offer yourself as reference. As his application has been sent off, and I came to know about it only yesterday, I thought I might ask you to write to the College, and if possible recommend him. I shall also be greatly obliged if you could use whatever influence you have there. I assure you that I shall ask nothing from you than what you think of his qualifications. He will have to justify his selection by his own work. Please let me know what you can do. If you would rather not intervene I would accept that. But I think you would not object to be a reference as to character, etc.

I am writing a long article – to be published in 2 parts for Khushwant Singh, taking your remark on me as a peg. You have said that if I am regarded as an Anglophile that is my doing. I am going to explain in what way I am Anglophile or pro-British, and in what way my critics are Anglophobe and patriotic. It will be huge fun. I am sure you get the I.W.I. at Lusaka. If you do not I shall send you a clipping.

With all good wishes to you and your wife, I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

Nirad C. Chaudhuri

[September 1981?]

My dear Natwar,

I am enclosing the screed on your book. You may use it in any form you like, or get it published as a full-length review. I hope you will like it.

I might tell you privately that there are a number of bad misprints in it, and one which is the worst is on p. 34 in the line 'The Jatni did not in vain bear the pain of travel'. English printers have become so illiterate that they no longer know the word travail.

There is another point to which I would draw your attention. The index has Najib Khan and Najib ud-Daulah as if they were two different persons.

I might tell you that the picture (traditional portrait) of Suraj Mal which you print was seen by me first when I was a schoolboy in a text-book of history published so far as I remember by Indian Macmillan. That was as far back as 1911 or 1912.

Last of all, I would thank you for giving me a copy of your book. Let me also know what you thought of my latest article in the T. of I.

Yours very sincerely,

Nirad C. Chaudhuri

5. LETTERS FROM RAJA RAO

C/o Richard Mackenna
Box 1115
Chapel Hill
North Carolina
April 11, 1963

Dear Natwar Singh,

I was so sorry I could not say good bye to you before I left – but the ways of government responsibilities are such that, I understand, you had to go off to the U.N. And as I told you once, in the heart of Dharma is all love. So that my way of saying good bye to you was to understand you being at the U.N. Dharma is the only measure and meaning of life.

I have learnt this with great pain, but I am trying to live it to the best of my ability.

Thank you also for the Passport.

Herewith a letter from John Murray. It seems to me just stupid. So, today I will write to Allen and Unwin and I hope you will hear from them directly.

I have written to Ahmed Ali.

Life is too short except for the acts noble and simple we have to perform that we may leave the world without a trace. The Ganges carries away our unperformed acts – the inner Ganges, and as such all we have to do to recognise the essential, and be dissolved. But when rightly understood dissolution itself is to recognise that never was anything to be dissolved. One has moved away from nothing. How can one move away from the 'I'.

Yours sincerely,

Raja Rao

P.S.: Forgive me, I live with such little awareness of dates, I have written April 16, whereas, I think, it is probably April 11, which promises well for my being well before time for the Forster essay!

C/o Sri Rajeshwar Dayal
9 Racecourse Road
New Delhi
August 8, 1963

Dear Natwar Singh,

So here I am in the heart of the capital and in the midst of an India that is so painful to discover – so confused, so unwilling to see what is to be done soon, the small man has become important and the important man small. I have never suffered in India as since I landed in Bombay. I have never heard but tales of woe and of moral degradation. Something big must come out of it all for fortunately India is greater than the Indians who make it. Yet with the monsoon and the sound of birds how classical is my land, my land whom the Bharthas fought for and gave their name to, and whose descendants too messed up oh so long ago! There's a power in India stronger than her miseries – a beauty that surpasses our pettinesses. India shall always be holy and noble.

I wish you were here.

I want to go to Benares in about a week. Could you cable to me to say if you have written to your friend the Maharaja of Benares about me. On receiving your answer I will write to him. I think he could help me a great deal with regard to my work. And my work ultimately is a dedication to India. Never did this seem so necessary for each one of us, as now.

I have seen neither Dr. Radhakrishnan nor Panditji yet – I haven't told them I am here yet. They are so busy and I thought I would see them when they have a little more breathing time. Anyway I have nothing to tell them that would be new or important.

Your troubles with Harcourt Brace I hope are over. I imagine by now you have your own text ready. Could you, you think let me have a copy of my text. It needs still a few corrections. I saw Shantha in Bombay: she was sweet and noble as ever in a world that is neither honest nor noble – except for the Bhayya. There's one here (the guard) who is always reading the Tulsidas Ramayan and he is my friend.

I am grateful to you for all you did for me in New York.

Yours ever,

Raja Rao

P.S.: I have also been trying to see if I can get a few more short stories for you. I saw my mother and family in Hyderabad. Day after tomorrow I go for the weekend to Hardwar and to the Ganges. She will purify. And I I am proud of the Indian that you are.

Palais Provençal
Grasse
A.M. France
April 2, 1964

My dear Natwar Singh,

How long ago it seems to me, it is, that I wrote to you. Meanwhile I have been ill, and yet withal I have ventured about in India and have returned to Europe a new man. And now I am going to visit you — I reach New York at about 6 p.m. on April 8th and will probably go to my old address—C/o Frank Ortega, 270 West End Avenue, Tel. Schuyler 4. 1732.

I hope very much you are in New York and that I will see you. But I must see you soon as I leave for Texas (for my lectures — 10 lectures on the Development of Philosophical thought in India in the 19th and 20th century) on April 10 evening or April 11th morning.

Rajeshwar Dayal told me of a message you had sent me. It must have got lost for I was travelling so much in India.

I had a delightful letter from E.M. Forster about my essay and about a letter I had written on his birthday. What a remarkable man he is — he seems to grow in stature every day.

India is dear and beautiful as ever—only the Indians sometime make it so confused. Yes, India is great — and so full of

joy and peace. So, homage to her.

Yours ever,

Raja Rao

40 Acres Club
Austin (Texas)
June 4, 1964

Dear, dear Natwar,

It's a poor excuse to say I have been busy, I have been seriously ill (unable to read or write for three weeks and even now have to ration my reading and writing), and not write to you. All I can say is, you have been constantly in thoughts and one of the people not writing to whom has given me discomfort. Forgive me.

I am still not well, so I will write a short note only. I reach New York on Monday afternoon about 5 p.m. by the Braniff airways. If any of you were free I should be happy to see your face at the airport. I feel so exhausted that a friendly face will do me a lot of good.

Give my deep regards to Mehrotra. And to you my never failing affection.

Raja Rao

P.S.: I was to have gone to see Forster in Cambridge. He is also ill, he says, but I will go later to England.

C/o Sri Rajeshwar Dayal
9 Race Course Road
New Delhi
September 8, 1964

My dear Natwar Singh,

I am grateful to you for your cable and the letter that followed: yes indeed I did go to Banaras and did stay as the guest of His Highness the Maharaja, but I was so ill that I

could not even go to Ramnagar to see him. I stayed at the guest house in the city. It was a pleasure to live in such relatively ancient surroundings, with such ancient mannered servants, to feel the quiet of the earth that knew history. And what shall I tell you of Banaras – I was well just for two days – and the meaning it is to me. And what a contrast to Delhi where everything seems so fragile – the Ganga is the law of our land, and he who knows how to love and revere her, also knows how to live rightly in this our holy land. I had a long afternoon with Panditji – he has grown so old but when I spoke of the Ganga and quoted to him Sanskrit verses his eyes lit up. I was so happy to have seen him.

It is so good to be in India and feel the civilized influences of man not only as between man and man but also as between man and bird and bird and tree. How gentle, how nobly simple, intelligent and loving this our land, our holy land. The other day at a diplomatic party I met some Marathas, and how fiercely proud they were. Yes, India can be saved by those who have fought to protect her honour. And the Bhaiyya who loves his land as rarely as anyone anywhere does his land, well our Bhaiyya too will fight. There is hope for this country because its human resources seem so inexhaustible. And Banaras proved it to me. I hope all is well with the Forster book. Please let me know. Could you send me the proofs of my essay for there are one or two very minor corrections I want to make in it. And the short story anthology – how is it progressing.

My own work is still in the stage of meditation – I hope soon I can start on my book. For life is meaning when one can do one's dharma. The way The Serpent and the Rope is understood by some people in India has moved me deeply. So I continue to pray that my new work may yet bring happiness to others. New York very soon will be so full of rough and tumble for you (because of the U N assembly) but you know, Rajput that you are, how to swim against any current. I hope the royal mount will sustain you till the end of the session.

Please pay my affectionate regards to Faubion and

Shantha and to you I send my dedicated friendship.

Yours ever,

Raja Rao

Palais Provencal
GRASSE
A.M. France
December 18, 1964

My dear Bhai-Sahab,

The Mediterranean stretches before me with the gentle curve of hills that slip into the sea, and a soft almost fairy-world rain pours over the whole valley, giving this silence and this genteel landscape a touch of South India. I am so well here that I have forgotten my terrible existence of New York, but my friends go with me wherever I go about.

I hope your despairs about our (beloved) country have not increased – I see so few newspapers that I do not know what is happening even in France. I did not see Malraux because he had gone off to Mexico. On the other hand I saw Ali Yawar Jung, and he and Pouchpadoss discussed my programme at some length. Today there's also a letter from Rajeshwar Dayal. He has been quite ill himself, but he wrote to me before his visit to West Africa. All in all Pouchpadoss and I have decided on July as an auspicious period for my visit to the black Kingdoms.

How is your novel progressing? And your anthology. You must know I think of you often and with such deep affection.

Yours ever

Raja

PS. I hope to return by Jan. 17. I will be in New York for a week.

C/o "Anandwadi"
Malakara
Via Chengannur
Kerala
March 4, 1965

My dear Natwar Singh,

As you see I am back in my beloved country — but how sad it all looks from inside. I am a little too anxious for the future but I imagine we must have confidence that there are serious men and women even more knowing and anxious than I am, and who are probably trying their best to do which they can for the country. You should know it better. Yet, I must tell you how sad the perspective looks from wherever I have been in the country.

I came straight here of course — my true "home". Next week I leave for Mysore when I go to see C.D. Narsimhiah and after Hyderabad, Bombay and Ahmedabad I will certainly come to Delhi sometime in April or May. I will let you know. I will be probably staying with the Dayals at Dupleix Road.

And you, what have you been doing? Have you done any more writing or any more with writing.

People in New York always speak of you with friendship.

Yours very truly

Raja Rao

PS. Did you get my letter from Austria written two or three months ago?

Hyderabad
November 20, 1965

My dear Natwar Singh

As you see I am in Forster's Hyderabad. In fact I have met Sahane, and we talked of our Forster book. He could review it for the Illustrated Weekly if you could send him a copy (C/o Department of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad).

My own copies of the Forster volume could you have them sent on to me C/o Rajeshwar Dayal. Just two copies you could send, if possible, to my French address: Palais Provencal, Grasse, Am. France.

My health has been very bad and I am going to Bombay next week to enter a clinic. It is not very serious but a most trying nuisance.

Give Santha and Faubion my deep respect and affection, and may I send the same sentiments to you.

Yours sincerely

Raja Rao

PS. I hope Harcourt Brace have given you no more trouble.

C/o A.E. Jolis
10 Avenue
July 21, 1967

Dear Natwar Singh,

Paris is like home for me in a way – the trees, the roads, the silences and the architecture of language seem so familiar that I feel I have known it for many lives. But India is the home of all homes, as I shall be there day after tomorrow – on Tuesday.

This is just a hasty note to say I am so happy we met, so happy we started working together and I hope we shall do better and nobler things in the times to be.

I am also grateful to you for all you did for me.

Yours ever,

Raja Rao

PS. In Delhi, where I shall go on July 31st, my address will be C/o Sri Rajeshwar Dayal, 9 Race Course Road.

1808 Pearl Street
Austin (Texas)
November 10, 1968

Dear, dear Natwar,

I did not send you a telegram for your wedding but my thoughts on that day were much with you – much with you not only because you are a friend but because I expect important things to come from you and as such you should have a deserving companion. That your wife's background is so good makes the possibilities of her offering you better things than most women could a certainty. I do wish you beautiful things in life.

As for me I am happy to tell you that my Ganges book is now (almost) completed and Macmillans think much of it is better than anything I have ever done. This does surprise me but then authors are such poor judges of their own works. The manuscript is now with John Murray in London and I await their reaction to the book. It is a strange, almost bewildering book and belongs to no recognisable form. It is more like a Purana than a descriptive book and often more like a novel than a book on the Ganga. A book has its own destiny and the author may not interfere with its native structure. Who is the author anyway? I am happy to tell you that Katherine and the baby and I are coming to India in January and will stay about six months – in the south and the north, of course in Benaras. I am a little afraid my asthma will give me trouble in India again – because of the dust, but you know how unpredictable is asthma. And of course I will come to Delhi and of course we shall see each other again. I want to hear of your India and how sad or beautiful is our beloved country – precious beyond all continents, lands, nations. The more I contemplate the greatness of India the more I suffer at what seems to be happening there today. How one wishes one could be of help. And my help can come through my writings, I hope.

By the way could you after presenting my respectful regards to the Prime Minister, get two facts from her: 1) The Gotra of the Nehru family – and no book on Nehru has it. 2) The date in 1942 when she was arrested in Allahabad. If

you could find out from anyone else without giving her the trouble, it might even be better. She may have more important things to think about. And what is your intellectual activity now? Do you go on writing? Your friends in New York remember you with much warmth and I with deep affection,

Raja Rao

PS. Have you been able to discuss with any one the possibility of India offering E.M. Forster some national honour? It should be so wonderful!

Care A.E. Jolis
589 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. USA
[1968?]

My dear Natwar Singh,

I am writing to tell you that an eminent European scholar in Linguistics, Dr Edgar Polome you know him of course (head of the Department of South Asian Studies, University of Texas) is coming to India and will be there from September 8th to October 2nd. And I should be very happy if you could make use of his presence in India for our benefit. Dr Polome teaches Vedic Sanskrit at the University of Texas, and also gives advanced courses in Swahili (for he is one of these rare scholars in Indo-Germanic and in African sociolinguistics). I have suggested that he should primarily lecture on Indo-European Mythology because it's a fascinating field and we in India do not know enough about it. For a more specialised audience he could also talk on the problems raised by African languages.

He will be with you soon. His address is: Box 8058, Center for Asian Studies, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

Dr Polome is also a very good friend of mine.

Since it's not often that a man of his competence visits India I hope we can use him to the best of our ability. I know it's a little late to organise all the lectures one could in India, but I should be grateful for any meetings you might be able

to arrange with our scholars, and any addresses he could give to learned audiences.

Thanking you,

Yours very sincerely,

Raja Rao

PS. I have been meaning to write to you since last year (at least) and have not done so partly because of my poor health, and partly because of my work – my new book is almost finished. I am finishing it on the farm of a dear friend of mine at Poughkeepsie, New York.

May I tell you I miss you when I go to New York. You have such a vital presence and such dedication to India that I used to be grateful you were in New York in a world where India is not as deeply cherished or understood. Will you be coming soon this way? I hope you do.

Yes I will see your friend Goldstone when I am in New York sometime soon. My sister Vilasini Haravan might call on you for some minor help she needs. She works in the Statistics Bureau and she thought you might be useful to straighten out her problems. What has happened to your novel. Please write.

Yours always

Raja Rao

Austin (Texas)
January 5, 1969

Dear Natwar Singh,

It was so wonderful to see you in New York but I wish we had more time with each other. However, I hope to see you in India sometime during this year, and maybe we'll have more opportunity for discussion on vaster intellectual horizons. I hope your book is making progress. Has your essay on E.M. Forster already appeared?

Since you told me that you can't read my handwriting I

have taken the liberty to dictate this letter to a very dear friend who will type it for me. If it sounds pompous it is because I am unaccustomed to dictating letters, so forgive me.

I write to you however on a small but important matter. You probably know that my African trip was at last decided and that a certain Shivaramakrishnan from the Press Relations, Ministry of External Affairs, has written to me about my program. Now I have to ask you a very delicate question: do you think I can do something useful in Africa? — by which I mean do you think the arrangements made for my trip give me an opportunity to meet the right people in the right places so as to be able to talk about the right things? Now so far I have received no plans or instructions nor whether Mr Pouchpadas from Paris is accompanying me for his presence would make the trip most useful. The two of us could do four times what I alone could do. Since Rajeshwar is not there anymore I thought I should trouble you with this request to tell me honestly as a friend whether you think my trip would be useful at all. As you know I do not need a safari to Africa by any means for I have poor health and much work, but if there is some good work to do anywhere for India of course I will go. Your advice will be the final touch for me to make my decision — though the decision in a way is already made insofar as I first agreed to go. Otherwise I tremble at Indian competence and my own fallibility.

I hope the baby and your wife are well. I'll see your brother in New York. Meanwhile please write to me as soon as possible and forgive the nuisance that I am.

Raja Rao

The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas 78712
Dept. of Philosophy
September 11, 1978

My dear Natwar,

I have been meaning to write to you. I received both your letters — but you know how lazy I am in writing letters. But I shall one of these days.

Meanwhile I send this letter of introduction. Naik is a very bright student from Zambia, and he is going back. So I thought it would be good that he should go and see you.

Naik is an immensely intelligent student but the University machine want common fodder. He came to my graduate seminar — for one whole semester and did a splendid job which was assigned to him.

I think someday he will do a work in philosophy which will be creative.

I am sure he will be happy to see you and thank you for receiving him.

Your family I imagine is back with you. Sorry I missed you in Delhi.

Yours ever,

Raja Rao

6. LETTERS FROM R.K. NARAYAN

Mysore 2
April 10, 1961

My dear Natwar,

What a joy it was being with you in Delhi. I miss you badly, I tell you. Have you no business which can bring you to Mysore?

I used to be a hopeless letter writer before, but now I promise improvement. I am going to write to you as often as I hear from you, and if I don't hear from I will always leave one at credit.

I want some more copies of the photo with the P.M., preferably some that include Indira, and the negative of my picture. Could you manage all this? I would hesitate to bother anyone about photographs, but the occasion is special and I feel I can take this liberty with you. Thank you.

Did you manage that piece for The Hindusthan Times? How did it go?

I am in a torment about the choice of a theme for my next novel. I am thinking of a new subject each day and rejecting it after a few hours of enthusiastic speculation. The most acceptable seems to be Woman-eater of Malgudi!

Affectionately,

R.K. Narayan

Yadavagiri
Mysore 2
February 7, 1962

My dear Natwar,

Forgive my long silence. Please don't mind if I continue on the typewriter. I generally alternate between the two, as you know. Nowadays I have got used to the ready-flow of the

ball-point, but alas it is not good for more than a line at a time, but the old, fat-in-the middle aristocratic writing instrument inhibits itself unexpectedly and you can never be sure of the flow. I don't like the typewriter. It makes me sit stiff. So what does it amount to? That one must give up all forms of writing in order to be at peace with one's self.

Well my dear Natji, I am delighted to hear from you. Good of you to write to me twice since Christmas. Since coming back to India, I have been very busy. Don't ask "What were you busy about?" I am not able to give a coherent explanation. I visited Delhi, I wrote on Gandhi for LIFE, I promised articles for magazines and broadcast talks and invariably backed out at the last minute. My mind is buzzing with a new character for a novel and I am writing just five hundred words of it day and not more, which is again a quarter of my general quota of writing in former days, necessarily so since I am more than twice my own age of about twenty-five years ago when I began writing! What a piece of statistics; I hope it makes some sense. I am also planning on a vast scale the book of mythology for Marshal,* and I spend some enchanting hours now and then with a real, live pundit who helps me with the research. I am also fixing my house all the time, white-washing, arranging, furnishing and so forth, which leaves me panting at the end of the day. I am just back after two months stay with my grand-daughter. I feel like going back there, now or very soon, abandoning everything. So you have a picture of me. I am delighted to know that you have your apartment now. I shall be delighted to come and stay in your spare-room provided it doesn't bother you in any way. You may rest assured that I will come to you very happily indeed if you have no other guest at the time I arrive. I have no clear plans for coming to New York now as I have been pretty stiff with Harvey when he approached me again, and I won't relax unless he accepts my terms of collaboration. It was Ved Mehta and you that helped me get a new vision of Harvey;† thank you both. Please pick up the phone and give

*Vice President of the Viking Press, New York.

†Harvey Breit, one time editor of the New York Times Book Review wrote the stage script of "The Guide," which closed after three nights in New York.

my love to Ved. I will write to him sooner or later, but I have been thinking of him a great deal just as I have been thinking of you. I have an invitation to visit Australia in April, after that I may either come to New York (if Harvey proposes it) or visit England for a month. I had an enchanting time in London, and I am tempted to go back there. MAN-EATER was published a couple of days ago by Heinemann and seems to roar its way through if I may judge from the cables I have been receiving....

Please keep writing to me as often as you can.

May I exploit you for a small help? I bought a refrigerator from Corvette as you will see from the enclosure. It was in the name of S. Krishnaswami. The refrigerator arrived and is in use. It is a small portable model with legs for which they charged extra. But the legs have not arrived, although, from the bill you will see that I have paid for it. They also said that a booklet explaining its operation would be enclosed with the package. This is not to be found either. Could you take it up with them and ask them to mail both by air-freight? Don't bother about this if you have no time. Forgive the trouble.

Affectionately,

R.K Narayan

PS. If Corvette are willing to supply the legs, please tell them to address the parcel to me straight and not to Krishnaswami.

Yadavagiri
March 20, 1962

My dear Natwar,

I was delighted to have your letter. I am off to Australia today, visiting Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Actually I am writing this in a plane to Delhi, where I shall spend a day with Narayan and Rekha.* Of course we will talk about you as much as possible. I am quite charmed to hear that Harvey

*Dr. V.K. Narayan Menon and his Bengali wife.

thought I treated him like a lackey. I don't know who is a lackey, never having had one; but please assure Harvey that I'd never treat a lackey as badly as I would a 'collaborator' that actually turns out to be murderer of a novel. You were handsome to defend me. Actually, do you know that he has approached me again, fourth attempt in four months: he wants to produce it with Zia next season. I have said yes provided I have the final approval of the script. Let us see how it goes this time.

I'm delighted that you are in touch with Marshall. I have not heard from him at all. Our contracts have been satisfactorily concluded. Why should it ever be otherwise? I have no idea what went on between my agents and Viking, but always and ever I place implicit trust in my friendship with Marshall & Tom, and I would not dream of writing my books for anyone else. You must please convey this to Marshall, I have been receiving hints now and then of the bothers they face from my agent. I'm spiritually committed to Viking, apart from all other considerations.

I am progressing with my novel, at a somewhat slower pace than I had anticipated. All this amount of travel is partly responsible for it, but also feel that the book should gain a lot of strength by growing unhurriedly. I am at work on it even in my Australian journeys; we should be able to see a couple of hundred pages before October. I'll tell you how it's getting along. Formerly I used to set 2000 words as my daily quota for a novel, but now I feel that the best results are obtained when I write only 500-1000 words a day. Anyway don't put too much reliance on what I am saying now, as I discover a new theory of writing with each new book and each day. There can be no axiom in writing.

Please give my love to Santha and Faubion.† I hope you see Natarajan regularly. A thousand thanks for asking me to stay in your flat. I am not quite certain when my next trip to New York is coming off as my Australian visit has come up rather suddenly. Please be writing. I expect to be back in

†Santha Rama Rau and her writer husband Faubion Bowers. They were divorced in 1970.

Mysore at the end , April.

Affectionately

R.K. Narayan

Yadavagiri
August 30, 1962

My dear Natwar:

Why have you not written to me for ages now? I wrote to you about a month ago, did you get the letter? My trip to US is postponed to December. I very much look forward to meeting you at that time in New York. It was awfully good of you to have given my address to Dev Anand who wrote to me and then met me and we have arrived at a very satisfactory arrangement for the production of the GUIDE both in Hindi and English. I am dreadfully busy with a book for Marshal. I hope to complete it by December.

Please write to me a long letter about everything.

Affectionately,

R.K. Narayan

Yadavagiri
November 24, 1962

My dear Natwar,

Many thanks for your letters — the latest one and the last one. But pray forgive my silence. I accumulate the letters of persons I love since I always intend to write a leisurely reply! But it never comes to pass. Professional authorship is a hurdle in the path of good correspondentship. As Marshall might have told you I am writing our puranas, and what is more, enjoying it immensely. Don't be surprised if I become a puranik very soon, sitting under the village banyan and narrating a story!

I am delighted to hear that you are proposing to assemble

a short story collection. My best wishes and blessings. I will send you a copy of An Astrologer's Day if I do not come bearing it myself. But my own plans are a little indefinite at the moment. I must complete at least the first draft of my puranic stories before I leave; and various other factors. Anyway if I come to New York, I will write to you ahead and occupy the bed-room you have so kindly kept for me. And perhaps we could sit gossiping all night. How good you are. Thank you.

I had a letter from Shyamsunder Nath* months ago, which I must answer before long.

God bless you,

Please keep in touch.

Affectionately,

R.K. Narayan

Mysore 2
March 29, 1963

My dear Natwar,

I am delighted to hear from you. I owe you actually three letters. I received the card that you and Santha sent together sometime in December, which came to me last week. I have received your review of Raja Rao's book, which you have done very well indeed. I am very happy to note that Raja Rao is in New York, and if he stays on I shall look forward to seeing him sometime. I am planning to visit New York after I complete my Mythology book, of which a goodly part is already sent for Marshall to read. I am awaiting Marshall's reaction.

Oh, my most understanding friend, you must forgive my saying 'No' to your Forster proposal. I adore him as you do but I can never perform the task of writing a message or an article as you suggest. For one thing, I am unable to take my mind off the book I am desperately trying to finish and secondly I am not good for any such serious, concrete, and

*At present our Ambassador in Brazil. Wrote poetry at one time.

responsible job. Please again, forgive me. I give you my sincere good wishes.

Please tell me how Santha is getting along. I owe her an apology and a letter. I received a cable from her long ago about Zia.* Since I was at Delhi at that time, I could see the cable only weeks later. In any case, although I agree with her that Zia would have been perfect, I could not have done anything useful as film folk are very un-influencible and generally manage to get along without being clogged by the author's judgement. Please give Santha my love and tell her that I will write to her a long letter if I don't see her before that.

Please ask Raja Rao if he remembers a quarter of a day that we spent together at Madras aeons ago. Tell him that I cherish that memory.

All the best,

Affectionately,

R.K. Narayan

Yadavagiri
September 7, 1963

My dear Natwar,

Forgive my long silence (and I, in return, forgive yours). I was so often near starting for New York that I thought I might see you, and talk to you about everything. Now the time has come. I'm coming to New York before the first week of October. I want to leave here sometime in the last week of this month, spend a week in London, and then on to New York for about 12 weeks. I have plenty of work with Marshall. I know you will be very busy at the U.N. All the same, I hope you will give me a little of your time. There is also your standing invitation to stay with you. Certainly I will be delighted to do so, if your spare room is free. Otherwise, I'll take a room in my old hotel Chelsea (23rd Street).

*Zia Moin-uddin — played Dr. Aziz in the Broadway version of *A Passage to India.*

You should not hesitate to turn me off to Chelsea, from the Air Terminal, if your accommodation is restricted. Don't hesitate to tell me so. You are too close a friend for me to mistake you. Anyway, could you cable me a reply as soon as you see this letter?

Rest in person.

Affectionately,

R.K. Narayan

[1965?]

Dear Natwar,

You, bad boy, never told me what you were up to — and now this morning's Hindu springs a surprise on me by publishing a review of your Jawaharlal! A good review, and God bless you with success, both in literature and Foreign Service; but I find it hard to forgive your demure silence (I have had to change my pen at this spot as the one I started with has begun to behave like a stencilling stylus withholding the ink under all circumstances — Parker 61, the executive pen, the expense account pen, fit for a gift but alas not for writing).

I met Santha a week ago in Bombay, and I spent a lovely morning talking to her. It did one good to find her in her old form.

Please remember me to G.P., and give him my best wishes. I hope his wife has recovered her health now. I met him in London last year, when he was passing an anxious time over his wife's health.

I met Mr Natarajan at Madras a month ago. I was greatly distressed to note that their family is finding life in the Mother country not quite agreeable; and all his children are agitating to be taken back to New York!

I am at work on my novel, but plan to write the last few chapters in New York, where I hope to come at the end of October. Where will you be? May I hope to have the joy of meeting you as often as your other occupations and preoccupations will permit? You will be happy to know that

Harvey Breit's case was quashed in an arbitration. He can never bother me again.

Affectionately,

R.K. Narayan

Yadavagiri
October 1965

My dear Natwar,

I was unhappy to hear that you had to rush to India on account of your father's demise. Please accept my heartfelt sympathies. Where is your brother now? Has he come back to Bharatpur?

My original plan to leave for U.S. has had to be dropped. Perhaps I shall be able to start out in November. .

I know how busy you must be at this time. God bless you.

Affectionately,

R.K. Narayan

Yadavagiri
September 25, 1967

My dear Natwar,

Please accept my belated congratulations and blessings. I was away at Leeds to receive my D.Lit., and I returned home only last week and was overjoyed to see the invitation for your marriage.

God bless you and Heminder whom I hope to have the pleasure of meeting when I am in Delhi next.

Affectionately,

R.K. Narayan

Mysore 2
October 25, 1978

My dear Natwar,

I am delighted to hear from you after all these months of silence. But I was in touch with Sharada Prasad and he kept me informed of your welfare. When you are in this country next, please let me know so that we may meet. I note that Hem and children are now here. When I go to Delhi next, I will try to telephone to her.

Many thanks for accepting Anthony Curtis's assignment. I shall look forward to your piece. Don't spare me. It is very pleasant for me to see my earlier works reprinted by Heinemann methodically within two or three years. My handicap all along has been my agency in London, which handled my manuscripts since 1937 but functioned like a government office in a routine manner without any push or initiative. Graham Greene pleaded with me to change my agents, which I have done now, and I hope my British contacts will improve with all new work, although the earlier books are still with the old agency.

What am I writing now? Good question, but I am unable to answer it coherently. I suspect I have lost the patience to write a novel, which may tie me up for months and months. My inclination is all to write short stories, long and short ones: the possibility of variety in themes and economy in the writing appeals to my mind, and I am plodding on in the afternoons writing a few hundred words as I have always done, but God alone can have a knowledge of what it will all turn out to be! I am reading plenty of worthless American novels, in quantity and contents all alike! America has ruined the world of letters through its commercial expertise and best-seller 'syndrome', and computerized formula fiction with its million sales.

I read your article on Rajaji with great pleasure. Very readable and interesting indeed....

Do you recognize this typewriter on which I am composing this letter? It is the Olympia, which you sold me in New York for 60 dollars nearly fifteen years ago.

Where is Bhagwat? Please give him my warmest

remembrance when you write to him next. I greatly look forward to seeing him when I am in U.S. next spring. I have an invitation to visit Berkeley for one month as a 'Regent' lecturer. It is some chair, I think; and I am looking forward to it.

Please keep in touch,

Affectionately,

R.K. Narayan

7. LETTERS FROM MULK RAJ ANAND

F 20 University Campus
Chandigarh 3 (India)
March 29, 1963

My dear Friend,

I have your kind letter of 19th March. I vividly remember our meeting at the house of Narayan Menon. I only wish I have been able to see you for pure friendship after that. But my visits to Delhi are always rushed and there was no occasion to ask Narayan whether you were still there or have gone abroad. I hope if you return here for little while that we will meet.

As you know, my old ties with E.M. Forster are very dear to me. I have learnt much from this Guru. And, of course, I would like to contribute a short piece of reminiscences and comments to the volume which you are envisaging. I hope to send you this piece before the 25th of May.

Please give my warm regards to Raja Rao and Shanta Rama Rau. Please tell Shanta not to despise me as much as she does. I have tried to serve our country as intensely as I could. If I have failed she could tell me why I have failed, but not dismiss me out of hand, merely because of political differences. Raja Rao and I also have political differences, but I have the highest respect for him and, I believe, he has no contempt for me.

In literary criticism a battle of ideas is permissible, but not mere dismissal of an old writer with a phrase.

With kindliest wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Mulk Raj Anand

25 Cuffe Parade,
Colaba,
Bombay 5
May 8, 1963

My dear friend,

I was thinking of you and had infact written a piece for the Souvenir volume for Morgan Forster only last week end. It is in form of a letter, because I found I could say things more simply and directly than in any other kind of narrative. Reminiscences would become too long. And criticism would be invidious in a volume of this kind. Gratitude is best expressed in a direct approach, specially, as some asides are also possible. I will revise this letter and send it to you by the middle of this month.

I am afraid I have lost touch with Ahmed Ali a long time ago, and I do not know his present whereabouts. Perhaps, the Pakistan Foreign Office would redirect the letter.

Please give my very warm regards to Dorothy* and tell her I shall write to her soon. As you probably know, my duties in Chandigarh are onerous enough. And now I have come after a really two miles tour of the monuments of middle India and the Deccan to try to prepare three numbers of MARG ahead.

Incidently, may I impose on you, on behalf of MARG and ask if you can send me a list of say about fifty people, libraries and individuals in America, who might wish to subscribe to MARG. I am afraid we are unable to break through via the book sellers, because, after all, it is a specialist magazine and not exactly popular. The Prime Minister buys 500 copies for the Embassies and I don't know if you ever see it. I do not wish you to waste your time on this list immediately, but perhaps you can send this to me in

*Edited *Nehru: The First Sixty Years*, New York, John Day.

the course of next two months.
With kindliest wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Mulk Raj Anand

F 20 University
Chandigarh 3
July 26, 1963

My dear friend,

During the last twenty days, I have been having fever through a virus infection. As you can imagine, in this state of the body, the mind feels like the barren desert of Rajasthan, where the rains have not yet come. Yesterday was the festival for the beginning of Sravan, but it remained cheerless because northern India is famished....

I am happy to know that things have gone well for the book of homage to Morgan Forster. And it does not matter at all about the fees as far as I am concerned, as to how much it is. And, I think, the title you have chosen is wonderful. Perhaps you will find an echo of your own thoughts somewhere in my letter.

I have now begun my work on the museum in the University and feel I must get really well to complete it in one year. Perhaps when you return to India one day, you will come and see this experiment in making pictures into visual experiences.

With kindliest wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Mulk Raj Anand

Chandigarh 3
July 31, 1963

Dear Friend,

After writing to you last week, it occurred to me that I forgot to ask you to send me galley-proofs or even my text to revise before it goes into page-proofs. I would just like to add a few sentences if possible.

If you are reproducing the preface to **Untouchable**, perhaps you would like to put in the original beginning which E.M. Forster withdrew, because the person concerned, (I mean referred to) in this sentence was still alive and Morgan did not want to hurt him. Perhaps you could ask him if he would allow that beginning to go in rather than the tame sentence: 'This remarkable....' I quote the original beginning:

'Sometimes ago, I came across a book of mine A Passage to India, which had apparently been read by an indignant Colonel. He had written, "burn when done, has a dirty mind: see page 259." I turned to page 259 with pardonable haste there I found the words: "The sweepers of Chandrapur had struck and the commodes lay desolate in consequence". That light-hearted remark has earned me exclusion for military society ever since.

If the Colonel thought this of A Passage to India, what will he think of **Untouchable**, which describes a day in the life of a sweeper....'

You will agree that this is a better beginning. But our dear friend Morgan being sensitive, gentle and timid, did not wish it to be printed. I do not want to upset him in anyway, but perhaps now he may like the idea of using that sentence. But I am not insisting that he should allow it, because he had his own reasons for disallowing these words in the first instance.

With kindliest wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Mulk Raj Anand

Chandigarh 3
August 13, 1963

My dear Friend,

I am grateful for your courtesy in sending me the typescript of my letter to Morgan Forster. I have added a few things here and there in the attempt to suggest all those many things which were left out. Of course, I shall have failed to communicate even now the exact shade of my feelings towards this great man, because he is so human, so much more human than most people. I particularly wanted to draw attention to some of his weaknesses, which make him difficult and yet lovable. Anyhow, such an attempt can only be made in a longer piece. But, perhaps, even that will be misunderstood. People have forgotten that to do homage to genius one must also record the failings of a genius, without viciousness and anger.

With kindliest wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Mulk Raj Anand

PS. In case you can't read my scrawl, I attach slip for main addendum on page 3.

Encl. Letter to E.M. Forster.

Chandigarh 3
March 17, 1964

My dear Friend,

This is to thank you for your welcome news of March 9th. I wrote to you about ten days ago asking for a copy of the book. Perhaps that letter has crossed this one of yours.

I was rather moved at the end of the last year when I received a letter from Morgan Forster in his old whimsical style. And it reassures me to know that he is not taken umbrage at my open letter.

I hear well of the book from Krishna Kripalani and Raja

Rao, whom I met in Delhi two days ago. I am sanguine that the special circumstances which bind us to E.M. Forster will be appreciated by many people. You did well in sensing the situation when you decided to bring out the volume.

Please send me the royalties due to me any time you like. If you do so before the 10th of April, then please send it to my Panjab University address, otherwise 25 Cuffe Parade, Bombay will find me until the end of June.

With kindliest wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Mulk Raj Anand

25 Cuffe Parade,
Bombay - 400 005
January 8, 1975

My dear friend,

I happened to be shooting the little film on Krishna as a naughty boy, near the Surkuti by the Jumna during the last week of December. After the rigours of this work (may the gods who are not there, spare you the humiliation of ever doing a film in India), I thought of going to Jaipur to find out some books which may help me to understand how Sawai Jai Singh managed to survive for 43 years on the Gaddi of Jaipur, how he could keep the Maharatta empires at bay and the king makers of Delhi away from his doors, as also how he could build up Indian astronomy in twenty years. My brakes failed in Agra, so we rested the night at Bharatpur and, naturally, I was reminded of you, much more intensely because, we met your cousin, Shri Ragunath Singh, who lives in the big haveli in the middle of the vast farm. As was to be expected, his cordial hospitality made me want to go back again as soon as possible and there is a bird sanctuary which I love. Perhaps this enthusiasm has been inspired by our common friend, Misra.

I was able to photograph the Observatory in Jaipur and sundry other things. Then, by sheer coincidence, I had a call from Bhopal about something on which I have been working

for years – Sanchi. And there I met again the very sincere, young doctor of Philosophy, who has a thesis on E.M. Forster in India, has compiled many of the letters from Morgan to unknown friends (I mean unknown to us). I had mentioned him to you when I met you in London and I had asked you, on his behalf, for permission to reproduce Morgan's letters to you, published in the New Statesman. You had nodded assent and I hope that you can now put this on paper. Also, could you send me by air freight typescript of the letters or a copy of the Statesman.

Dr. Hamid Hussain wants you also to give him permission for your major article on Morgan Forster for his Anthology. About this he will write to you himself later.

Apart from Morgan, I hope, perhaps through him, we share certain things. These I would like to go on sharing with you, which means that you might write to me what you are doing away from your exalted position. And if you come home, please let us spend some time together just to be with each other to talk at random.

I would like to go on with this note and gossip, but as I have just come back after a month of being away, there are the inevitable arrears of MARG work.

May I wish you, Hem and the children a good New Year.

Yours,

Mulk Raj Anand

Bombay 5
June 22, 1976

My dear Natwar,

I am leaving for you a copy of my new novel **Confession of a Lover**, the third in the series, (**Seven Summers** and **Morning Face** being its predecessors) **Seven Ages of Man.**

I hope you will find time from your busy life to read it.

If you feel like writing a review for the **Times of India**, Sham Lal will publish it. If you don't feel like writing then, anyhow, your children will have it in the library, to read it one day for the background life of their ancestors in the

chief Khalsa Diwan.

I go 24th morning, being pulled back by the secret wish to finalise the fourth volume, The Bubble.

With ever warm regards,

Yours
"Uncle Nala"
Mulk

Bombay 5
July 21, 1978

My dear friend,

Greetings!

I have been absorbed in the new orientations of MARG which doubtless you have not seen, because the XP Division is probably shying off us because of the price having gone up through the pressures of cost of paper and printing. I hope, however you will get somehow to see the Homage to Jaipur volume in praise to Sawai Jai Singh.

I looked for the original of Morgan's letter to me which he wrote on seeing my article in your compilation. As it is precious, I have put it somewhere as a part of a treasure and probably because I hid it, I have misplaced it and can't find it.

But I gave a copy of this to Dr. Hamid Hussain for his compilation and I am asking him to send me a photostat which I shall sent to you as soon as I receive it.

I suppose you will be coming for the seminar on Forster in January in Hyderabad and this time we may honour the pledge of our friendship by spending some time together.

Meanwhile, I don't know if you are still writing for the English Press. Because selfishly speaking, my publisher, Arnold-Heinemann, needs a review from someone in the T.L.S. or Sunday Times of Confession of a Lover, which got the E.M. Forster Award this year, and is being imported in U.K. for distribution to the libraries. As you know, the borough libraries do not buy any book unless it has been reviewed in an English paper.

I suppose you never had time to read it. I don't blame you. It became very long inspite of ruthless editing. But I hope

when you get bored with your mission, you will permit yourself the fatigue of reading that book. I think you will find that it is an improvement on Morning Face and does create the urgency of facing the problem of growth into adulthood inspite of all the hindrances of our feudal family life.

I am nearly through with the next volume The Bubble, which is about my first English years – rather existentialist, but innovatory as I have experimented independently of Gide in trying to make a novel from letters, diaries, journals and by insetting a novel within the novel.

Unfortunately, as there are very few people interested in serious writing in our country, the impetus for going on is lacking, except that I find much discreet pleasure in remembrances of things past. But in our country, at the moment, Khushwant Singh's sensationalism preferred rather than the attempt to say something which may burn or singe the conscience of people. The literature of consumption is mainly Arthur Hailey, James Hadley Chase and Jacqueline Susan. That goes for all the merchants and the bureaucrats, specially the very young. And the professors want dead ideas as part of the array of philistine arguments, which they must give to students from Aurobindo and Sai Baba and T.M.

Surprisingly, Untouchable has just been adopted as a 'textbook' in Mysore University inspite of much opposition. So there may be remnants of decency in our culture who sympathise with the preface of E.M. Forster.

This brings you and the family my very warm regards,

Yours sincerely,

Mulk Raj Anand

Bombay 5
January 31, 1979

My dear Natwar,

This is to wish you a good New Year full of much writing and I hope we will be able to meet, next time you come to India.

I had thought that our dear friend, Morgan, taught us to

value friendship and it was my conviction that you had imbibed this gospel more than all of us, because of your nearness to him. It seems that your eminent position in the foreign service involves so much hard work, that you cannot adjust your travel to go out of your way if only to allow me to weep on your young shoulders.

I don't know what has made you suddenly remember me as a writer. But I welcome the order for Untouchable you have put through to Shri Balraj Bahri of Bahri Sons.

Since the last few years, I have been cheated successively by various publishers. The latest of these who are unconscionably corrupt are Orient Paperbacks. So I have been cutting my contacts with them steadily and have decided not to allow them to do any more of my eight paperbacks.

A very good and seemingly fairly honest South Indian publisher Prof. Sathyanarayana Rao, of Geetha Book House, New Statue Circle, Mysore, has brought out a fine edition of Untouchable, with an Afterword by Shri Damodar Rao and a note on the genesis of this novel by me.

I would like Bahri Sons to purchase the 110 copies which you wish to have of the paperbacks from Geetha Book House, through your bookseller.

I have taken the liberty to write to Shri Balraj Bahri yesterday, asking him to do this if possible, as the edition on Untouchable of Orient Paperbacks was brought out against my advice, with a terrible cover and with indecent haste to flood the market in Mysore. I may be suing Orient Paperbacks as they have confessed to their crime anyhow. I hope that my letter to Shri Bahri will be in time and he will accept my advice to purchase the copies from Mysore. It is a glorified 'textbook' edition, but as my definition of textbook novel is different from anyone else's, I have not allowed notes and questions and answers to appear and simply left it pure with the essays thrown in as Afterwords. It is a quite lovely production, designed by Dolly Sahiar. And the price is the same as the Orient Paperbacks, perhaps a little less.

I went to Delhi after eight months of sulking, to deliver a lecture to the Iran Society on the Herat renaissance of the 15th century, with special emphasis on Bihzad the great Persian Ustad.

The drawing rooms are full of gossip, one can't catch a bus from anywhere to anywhere, taxis are extortionate, but the sun shines nimbly on Lokayata and I am trying to restart my school for gardeners.

I daresay that things might improve a little, but after working in a village in Maharashtra, I find that everything conspires to make for disillusionment.

Still I have found that some old friends are still there, to touch every now and then and I am still writing my long seven volume novel. I don't think you ever had the patience to read The Confession of a Lover, though news of it got to Canada and U.S.A. and U.K. and it has got the first E.M. Forster Award. Perhaps one day you will be bored enough with office work and will read the new novel The Bubble, when it comes out, sometime this year.

Do write to Shri Bahri to take my advice and order the Geetha Book House edition, if they have not already purchased the black market edition of Orient Paperbacks.

With warm regards.

Yours sincerely,

Mulk Raj Anand

PS. Patiala is giving me the honorary degree of D. Lit. I wish you were there to see me come home to Punjab.

8. LETTERS FROM HAN SUYIN

An Introductory Note

I arrived in Peking in July 1956. The revolutionary air had not become stale and the spring of "a hundred flowers" was only a few months away. I was staying at the Hsin Chiago Hotel, that austere refuge of foreigners where one met efficiency combined with courtesy but without charm or intimacy.

On my very first morning I encountered the formidable language barrier, when I went down for breakfast. The menus were in Chinese and the "Comrade waiters" spoke no English. Not a promising start in the promised land. Just as I was beginning to despair, in walked a lady, sporting a colourful dress. I could not take my eyes off her. She was stunning. She sat, three tables away from me. Every few seconds I kept looking at her, thinking where had I seen her. Could she be... no of course not, what would she be doing in China. But she looked so familiar. Yes, she must be. I said to myself, "nothing venture, nothing have" and scribbled a note to her on the back of the menu. With some difficulty I succeeded in getting a "Comrade waiter" to take it to the lady sitting on "that table". My note said, "I am starving and cannot get my breakfast. Are you Han Suyin? If so, can you order my breakfast?" Oh! the things one does at twenty-six!

I waited. My pulse quickened. The answer demolished all barriers. "Yes, I am Han Suyin and I shall order your breakfast. Come and join me."

Thus began a many splendoured friendship that has survived all the ups and downs of Sino-Indian relations. In 1979, I dedicated the Indian edition of E.M. Forster – A Tribute to Suyin. Generous to a fault, she returned the compliment by making several very warm but thoroughly undeserved references to me in her autobiography. At times like these, life does appear enchanting. Without Han Suyin, the spring would go out of it.

39, Upper Pickering Street,
Singapore
July 23, 1958

Dearest Natwar,

Thank you very much for your letter of July 9th. I notice that you are in the exalted post of Under Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, which is more important than Chief Secretary or Minister because it is Under Secretaries who make up the bosses' minds. I shall probably have to come to you for an Indian passport one of these days and I hope that after due investigation, you will give it to me. I promise to go on thinking well of Indians. After all, they seem quite indispensable in this extraordinary world of today. When ever there's trouble anywhere, it's poor Mr. N. (not N for Natwar) who gets long letters from everybody just as if he was everybody's kind uncle. What a good time you must have comparing all the letters you get from the various statesmen; which was the longer, Khrushchev's or Eisenhower's?

Thank you for your comments on my book, I am sorry that there is some self pity in earlier chapters but, dear Natwar, I think it is because you are not a woman used as a mattress that you notice it. Of all the hundreds of women that I have known who have complained of scenes similar to those you find on pages 21 and 22, the most predominant characterization was self-pity. In another ten or fifteen years when you get to be my age, perhaps you will not think it self-pity. I can understand that you don't like John but I think the reason is that you have got some hero-worship of the stiff upper lip in your upbringing but I, as a doctor, see them when their upper lip is not only unstiffened, but positively drippy.

Finally, as to Unni, when did you ever know a man worthy of the love he was given? It is not one's worth that merits another's love but it is due to circumstances. Of course Unni is just an ordinary man and quite unworthy of Rukmini's sacrifice but he happens to be the incarnation of the principle of sex and that is the theme of the book and if you will notice, he keeps on saying that he is only a man and he is forever being given love and honour beyond his due. Again

perhaps, in another ten years, you will understand when the same thing happens to you as indeed it may.

I am going to Europe in September with Yungmei as my secretary and we shall certainly pass through Delhi. I shall send you a cable a week or ten days in advance. Can you reserve us rooms in a good hotel? I do not think I will stay with Malcolm this time, much as I like him. The gap between East and West to my mind is getting wider, I mean the gap in emotions and understanding and I view this with great concern. Only in your country do I find an attempt to understand both sides and bring them together but at the same time, I am alarmed by the price you have to pay for it. Perhaps we can have a long talk in Delhi.

I am sending enclosed a letter for Tikki.* He wrote to me but I have inadvertently misplaced his letter but I am sure you know where he is. I am also enclosing a picture which I thought you might like.

All the best from Lynn Robinson and myself,

Affectionately,

Han Suyin

PS. I have just found Tikki's letter so I am writing direct.

Singapore
August 11, 1958

My dear Natwar,

I am so glad that you like the pictures and thank you for your letter. I shall let you know the exact date of our arrival in Delhi later.

Please could you send me some of the reviews of "The Mountain," including your own as I don't seem to have received them from the International News Clipping Service to which I subscribe.

Half a million copies are being guaranteed in the United States and I am getting a great big sum but I personally am

*T.N. Kaul

not going to America. I will talk it over with you when I get to Delhi and I am sure you will understand why it is not wise to go there at this moment.

I do hope your asthma is better. No news of Marc Riboud except he is still in Japan.

Yours, in haste,

Han Suyin

PS. Elizabeth had to go out so she asked me to sign this. Greetings and you are the first Under Secretary I have ever known. May I call you "Sir". – L.R.

Singapore
August 28, 1958

Dear Natwar,

This is being typed for you by my new secretary, Miss Yungmei Tang. Employing Yungmei Tang is very exhausting and also very exhilarating. I still do not know how fast she can go, but I am trying to find out.

Yungmei and I will be going to Europe for her further education. We leave here, Singapore, round September 11th, and are due in Geneva on the 17th and in London in early October.

I am to be guest of honour of Foyle's Literary Luncheon in October, which is, you know, a kind of honour for a writer or other person and I shall be making a speech in 20 minutes.

It will not be possible for me and for Yungmei to come to Delhi on our way to Europe because we have not got the time. But I hope to spend a couple of days in Delhi end of October. I will let you know by cable from London about my arrival in Delhi.

I would like a copy of your criticism in the Illustrated Weekly of India. Please can you send it to me either here or to my publishers in London.

Yungmei and I send our affection.

Sincerely yours,

Han Suyin

PS. Dear Natwar, This is Yungmei's first try as being "secretary".

Singapore
August 30, 1958

Dear Natwar,

Thank you very much for the review which I liked. Thank you for being kind, although I think that you are one of the people who would like to cut Shakespeare by half and reduce Wuthering Heights to strips in a bubble-speaking comic for easier mental digestion. I think you have done your best but had you waited another ten years, you would have understood the book much better. So many people do not understand it, men I mean. Women understand it because they know what they really feel and either they love it, or are revolted, depending on whether they are frustrated or not.

As I probably told you in my last letter, I shall be coming to Delhi on my way home as I am to be Guest of Honour at Foyle's Literary Luncheon in London on October 10th and before that, I have to fit Yung Mei into an educational institution for a year.

All other news when we meet.

Yours ever,

Han Suyin

PS. Elizabeth has just dashed out on a case and says, "Sign the letters, Lynn".

Singapore
September 5, 1958

Dear Natwar,

On the eve of my departure, here I am having to take some of my precious time to answer your letter.

No plane touches Delhi which is completely out of the way of international air transport, except B.O.A.C. whose planes are always late. Therefore I am not going to touch Delhi on the way out but will touch there on the way back and then I will stay with you and see if you survive.

I have invited Ian Foster to the Literary Luncheon or to Cape's special party, I wonder if he will come. I have also asked Brian Abel-Smith to come. Both are invited in honour of you! Perhaps you could write to them and tell them not to look down their noses at the thought of lunch with a proletarian writer of tripe, and a successful Hollywood one at that.

Write to me care of Jonathan Cape Limited, 30, Bedford Square, London, W.C.I.

Affectionately,

Han Suyin

Geneve
September 20, 1958

Dearest Natwar,

I shall be in London on October 2 via Brussels and Paris, and staying at the Savoy. Please write to me there care of the Savoy Hotel in both my names and label to await arrival. I've written to Tikki in Teheran, but if he is still in Delhi could you contact him please and tell him I plan to be in Teheran on the 21st of October, and in Delhi on October 25th, and please could he write to me to tell me if this is okay. That is, if I don't die on the way. My tummy is bad. It's due to the too good food. I am rather ascetic where food is concerned and not used to a rich diet all the time. Usually if I eat one good meal I go without for a day or so. Here it is one good

meal after another and after two days here I can't eat at all. We poor Asians!

I just met Sharma your photographer and we are going out to dinner together tomorrow night.

This trip is really excellent as I am renewing old friendships. Geneva is a most peaceful city and if only there was not so much FOOD to eat I would be very happy.

Affectionately,

Elizabeth

Savoy Hotel, London
October 3, 1958

Dear Natwar,

I am writing from London, where I have just arrived. I have had your letter, and this is to say that I shall be arriving in Delhi around the 24th October if all goes well. I don't want to stay with Malcolm,* I would love to stay with you, but I can't be your mother or your sister or your wife, and as for your daughter – ha ha! Besides, I think Vincent will be coming up to Delhi, and so please will you book me a room in a hotel for two or three days?

Apart from that, please come to fetch me at the Airport because I can't stand the Customs any more. They seem to be worse in your country than in any other, and last time I was in Calcutta they were saying things like: 'Why do you come to India so often?' They should be terribly happy that a lot of nice tourists like myself, who don't bring their toilet paper and their drinking water with them, do come to India. But perhaps they will find out in a few years. Anyway, I'm not blaming you or the External Ministry for that.

I would hate to be interviewed on the All India Radio Network, it's much too English. But apart from all that, of course I would love to see you and I hope I will see lots of you in New Delhi.

Yungmei is fine, and as she has only just arrived and is a

*Malcolm Macdonald, U.K., High Commissioner in India.

November 10, 1958

Dear Nehru,

I've been back in Malaya since the 6th of November. The first 3 days back are always hectic since I have mountains of mail (not young) to go through & all sorts of Problems to solve for my staff. My accountant has left the bank, my partner is off for 3 weeks holiday my nurse is tired out & I've had to engage a temporary as my pharmacist is getting a new baby - someone quarrelled with somebody; something else broke, etc etc etc. Both were all decisions have been taken and everybody seems happy to be taken in hand again & have their problems solved for them. I believe tomorrow & the day after & again on the 20th.

It was really very delightful to see you in Delhi. I do enjoy your company and the great warmth of spirit and buoyancy you exude is yours.



After how you are proceeded to Calcutta by train, a journey I like because it gives one a terrible impression of the huge total of undemanding poor, I sometimes forget how

cautious person she will not tell me what she thinks of Old Blighty. If I had time I would go down to Cambridge to see your friend E.M. Forster, and I hope by now Cape has traced Brian Abel-Smith. Yes, I did run into Sharma in Geneva, but not his Russian wife. However, I am carrying a terrible camera, which keeps on snapping open so that I have to put it in my suitcase instead of hanging it tourist-wise round my neck, for his wife; and also an alarm watch. Yes, it is a watch with an alarm, and the alarm goes off suddenly and it frightens me so much that I can't wear it either. But Sharma was absolutely delighted with those two objects and I shall leave them with you in New Delhi for his Russian wife.

I enclose a Foyle's blurb, just because I am sure you know far more people than I do, and I would love to listen to your reminiscences when I get to Delhi.

Love,

Han Suyin

November 10, 1958

Dear Natwar,

I've been back in Malaya since the 6th November. The first 3 days back are always hectic since I have mountains of mail (not young) to go through and all sorts of problems to solve for my staff. My accountant has backache; my partner is off for 3 weeks holiday; my nurse is tired out. I've had to engage a dispenser as my pharmacist is getting a new baby — someone quarreled with somebody; something else broke; etc. etc. etc. But now all decisions have been taken and everybody seems happy to be taken in hand again and have their problems solved for them. I lecture tomorrow and the day after again on the 20th.

It was really very delightful to see you in Delhi. I do enjoy your company and the greatness of spirit and bubbling gaiety which is yours.

After leaving you we proceeded to Calcutta by train, a process I like. Vincent is an agreeable companion as he has the great talent of undemandingness; I sometimes forget

he is there and he never seems to try to recall himself into view, to thrust his presence upon me. This unobtrusive attentiveness is very rare. I am glad you could like him and he in his turn is sincerely devoted to you. He has not left your country and in some ways is very simple and unsophisticated, but what I need is precisely simplicity, especially when it is combined with subtle instincts and a very good faculty of understanding and acceptance. I hope you too one day will find someone who is, to you, as much human comfort as Vincent is to me.

We went down to the iron-mines at Bolani and it was fascinating to see India's II 5-year plan being worked out — with a good many hitches, but still worked out. V. has a wonderful cook who makes very good curries, and curries agree with me, the hotter the better.

I shall be stuck here now for a few weeks but after that will be coming up again, possibly with the Paramount team in January.

Affectionately

Suyin

PS. Can your conscience abet a lie? I told Silly Singh that the radio was for you — can you twist that around into something valid? I suddenly became shy and did not want to say: for Vincent....

November 15, 1958

Dearest Natwar,

Now that we keep on sending our friends to each other, may I recommend to your charm, your ability, and your gentle but most efficient care my dear friend Hans Taussig, who is the editor and runner of Eastern World, the magazine for which you expressed appreciation, and which, I believe, you do manage to read? Hans is a most wonderful person, because he is the most honest man I know in journalism, and his personal integrity and the justness of his unwavering confidence in Asia is something to be admired in times like

these when people would sell their mother for a few dollars (Mexican, American, Malayan, and even the rupee is much appreciated).

Your friend Shaun Mandy* wrote to me, rang up friends, and generally seems agitated by the thought that he might not meet me. I have written to say I shall see him when he arrives. I hope he does not get thrown out. I understand a poet from our country was thrown out of Malaya because he read poetry. Not only is it highly subversive to write, but it is becoming subversive to read, and as for poetry....well, as everyone knows, there are really Maoist messages even in Dylan Thomas.

I have been busy but find myself with plenty of time chiefly because I am dying to get back to writing and so my secretary says No No No to everything.

Do look after Hans. From November the twentieth on he will be at The Imperial Hotel, Delhi, where he intends to stay for at least ten days. I did love that time on the station platform because you look so wonderful and handsome in Indian garb. When are you getting married?

Affectionately,

Suyin

39, Upper Pickering Street,
SINGAPORE, 1.

22nd November 1958

Registered.

Mr. Natwar Singh,
22, Gymkhana Club,
NEW DELHI

Dear Natwar,

I have a favour to ask of you. I enclose herewith a letter to

*Editor, *Illustrated Weekly of India* for many years. Quiet an unusual and discriminating character. Died a few years ago in Spain.

General Thimmayya* and I should be very happy if you could take the trouble to see it reaches his hands.

It concerns a personal matter about which I feel very deeply and concerning which, General Thimmayya, without knowing me, has given me cause to sue for slander. As I wish to give him an opportunity to clear himself before I take any further steps, I thought I would write to him directly. As I do not have his address, I hope you will be kind enough to send it on for me, registered mail.

I am looking forward to seeing your friend Shaun Mandy next week. I hope your health is better. Your letters will always be a great pleasure.

Affectionately,

Suyin

Enclosed letter to General Thimmayya.

December 10, 1958

Dear Natwar,

I thought I would send you this review to show you how very diverse, not to say adverse, reviewers are to points of view unlike theirs.

Thank you for passing on the correspondence to General Thimmayya from whom I had a long and rambling two page letter. I do not like people who shoot their mouths in Paris and London.

I do not know whether you have seen Hans, who is a nice little man but has the typical refugee mentality sometimes of being afraid of people and things.

Paramount will be going to Nepal end of January or early February I hear.

The pressure of work has somewhat eased off now as the polio epidemic has died down. I hear your President was given a great welcome in Kuala Lumpur and the democracy of India contrasted with the communism of China greatly to the detriment of the latter in all speeches addressed to him.

*I don't recall what all this refers to. I do remember giving the distinguished General a letter from Suyin.

Well well.

May I wish you a happy New Year, and perhaps also a little bit of Christmas, though not in your religion.

Affectionately,

Suyin

Singapore
January 1, 1959

Dear Natwar,

Many good wishes for 1959. Are you marrying your Nepalese princess? If you are, don't forget to invite me to the wedding. I am looking forward to all those elephants which you say you will have in your wedding procession.

I cut out these little news items on your country and am sending them to you as I hope you will clear up the mystery for me. The item says that the U.S. Agricultural Dept. in Washington reports that there will be a record breaking rice crop in India. I thought Delhi was the capital of India and not Washington! Is this a sign of things to come? Has India really been bought up lock, stock and barrel by American dollars so that news of crop harvests can only be sent from Washington, D.C?

Lately I have received any number of news items all quoting Indian sources and all highly critical of China. I hope there will be some people in your country even-minded enough to see it would be a disaster for Asia should India be manoeuvred into becoming the Voice of America.

Affectionately, as always

Suyin

2 cuttings enclosed.

January 11, 1959

Dearest Natwar,

Thank you for your very sweet letter of the 6th of January. I am indeed very glad to hear that India is not going the way of the Philippines and Malaya, and selling herself for gold dollars. By all means take them (I do), but take them as a FAVOUR conferred upon the U.S.A. (as I deign to take money but refuse to change one iota of myself or even to go to America), and stick to your own principles.

I did not say that your President's speeches were anti-Chinese, but that the U.S.I.S. seems to have recruited a few Indian "intellectuals" to make anti-Chinese declarations. Your President did not say anything about China at all.

How is your asthma? I enjoyed your piece on Forster but I honestly think that all of you Anglicized Indians have a kind of hero worship for him which is much exaggerated. He is a very nice man; of that I am sure. But do you not think that you are making him into a plaster Yogi?

I am sorry Hans did not impress you, but I can understand you. He often gets on my nerves too. You have hit the nail on the head when you say that he was lion hunting. Yes, he is that way sometimes. When he heard I was boxing with Thimmayya he got so frightened, he begged me to stop.... I will not forgive his preferring a lion (full grown) to a nice, intelligent, really beautiful young man like yourself. As for Han Suyin, you know that she has no sense of hierarchy, caste, class, or boot-licking. She goes straight for the really fine people of this world, like Natwar, and is rude as hell to C in C's, Generals, Maharajahs, Presidents, lions, VIPS, and in general all Sacred Cows.

I am at the moment also engaging in single combat with the government here about their shameful treatment of doctors and other technical personnel. Don't worry, all will be well.

Of course I shall come to Delhi, if only to see you dearest Natwar. I liked Shaun Maundy, but was surprised that he found me beautiful; for I do not think of myself as such.

affectionately,

Suyin

Vincent is back in Bolani, he came here for ten days over the holidays. So glad Sharma's wife will be coming soon.

April 1, 1959

Dear Natwar,

Thank you for your sweet letter. I shall welcome the HUTHEESINGS and be nice; I have just made a most controversial TV appearance in the U.S. which has earned me brickbats and flowers; but as a result I am going to Canada in August to lecture on China; I have had dinner with the managing director of TIME LIFE (who is God Almighty after Henry Luce, as you know), and all due to the fact that I am controversial. If I were orthodox, toed the American line, sat up and begged and was good doggy woggy, they'd treat me high handedly. I am going to China in June and July to get some plain facts and also to say a few strong plain home truths about a few things. I think Peking needs some home truths occasionally, don't you? I don't mean about Thibet, I mean about a few other things.

I wish you would give me your firsthand news of the communes. Can you bestir yourself to write me a small report?

Vincent is very well and working hard; Durgapur, Bhilai, then he will go to Nangal I think near Delhi. I will ask him to see you if he comes to Delhi. Look after yourself, you are quite precious to me, in an affectionate, not too distant, and altogether human way.

Suyin

20 September 1959

Dear Natwar,

You must be on your way to Katmandu after the P.M. has left and there is comparative peace in Delhi. I have just

written to your friend S.S. Nath about his poems. I really liked Individuality, which I had seen in the May 31 Illustrated Weekly and actually cut out.

Dear Natwar may I thank you again for looking so well after me while I was in Delhi. I enjoyed seeing you, and Tikki.

I have to close my clinic because the new government wants to take over the whole building for government offices, so from now on please write to me at

68—m Jalan Ibrahim Sultan
Johore Bahru
Malaya.

Affectionately,

Han Suyin

Hong Kong

January 7, 1961

Dear Natwar,

How NICE to have your letter. But why should you be taken aback because you are writing to me? Surely it should be perfectly natural that you would want to write to me?

I have just been to China for three months on my annual visit and am in Hongkong, will be flying back to Malaya in a few days. It was cold in Peking, but even colder in Hankow, and I put on five catties in no time, am now trying to lose them before seeing Vincent otherwise he won't recognize me. Even my cheeks are like a fat baby's now!

I was in Szechuan and the progress is absolutely fantastic. The shortages are mostly in the cities, especially Peking and Canton are bad. All the hens and pigs that were communized are being handed back, and all my cousins are rearing pigs in their backyard now!

I do wish you were in London with Tikki. Then you could take Yungmei out (you see, as a mother, I've always dreamt of Yungmei having such nice escorts as you and Tikki rather than the dreary young weeds she seems to pick out...she loves lame ducks). At the moment the poor girl is in love with a

frightful beatnik who is actually NOT interested in marrying her at all but she seems to believe he is. The beatnik has just been to see me. I had to put my foot down as the only thing he is interested in is HSY's fame and possibly financial support so he can go on being beatnik.

But Yungmei* is so much in love she thinks he's wonderful and I'm a horrible mother NOT to finance them and so on. She will snap out of it, of course, but at the moment I hope Tikki gives her some fun and takes her out and if you are in London, please do so too. Indians are anyway the nicest of men. Witness Vincent. Still going strong with Vincent. It will be the sixth year soon.

I thought much of you going through the Peihai park some weeks ago. Hope I do see you some time. Please write to Malaya next as I'm flying there in four days time.

Affectionately,

Suyin

March 24, 1961

Dear Natwar,

I see your idea of replying to letters is two-monthly. Anyway, nice to see it. Yes, Yungmei's beatnik is gone thank goodness, and now she plans to study again and so I shall continue to finance her until she gets her degree, or gets married. Let's hope the experience will put her off all beatniks. As for your unsolicited advice not to be too hard on her, one sometimes has to be hard in order to get results. I do not see myself financing beatniks through Yungmei...do you?

I am so glad you have more faith than even in the Chinese government in me. The new line in China is utter modesty now...in other words, no more bombast, hence the impression you get that they are not half so good etc. I think myself that things have grown tremendously in the last four years

* Han Suyin's daughter by her first marriage

since I went to Szechuan. Of course the agricultural disasters are serious, but I think it is a good thing to have some setbacks. They're hard teachers, but it's good in the long run. You just wait and see.

I am asking E.H. about your subscription; meanwhile I am paying them two years subs for you, and you can give me back the money when you see me or take me out to lunch one day in Delhi and that, I am sure, will cost more than two years of Eastern Horizon.

Vincent is very happy, we just celebrated the completion of our first five years together, and are now well launched into our second five-year plan.

Affectionately,

Suyin

Ashoka Hotel
New Delhi

October 1, 1961

Dear Natwar,

Here in Delhi for 2—3 days with Vincent, on our way to Katmandu to celebrate our 5th anniversary, I learnt that you were in U.S. What a disappointment for me! I also heard from Coilho that you had your appendix out. Dearest Natwar, take care of yourself. I've finished a book and film on Cambodia for a month. Do write to me, still at

68—K, Jalan Ibrahim Sultan
Johore Bahru,
Malaya

or at P.O. Box 6, Bukit Panjang, Singapore.

I heard from Shirly Gordon* that you were a great friend of hers. That strikes me as funny, as I never heard you mention her before. She is a strange creature, I'm afraid, and at the

*I don't recall knowing anyone by that name.

moment I am not at all happy about her—she is very ambitious. What was she up to in India?

Vincent is well and happy, and I do hope to see you some time or other—the U.S. film company after paying me a huge sum have not yet started the film on Nepal, but that does not affect me. The new film I have finished (on Cambodia) is called: Your Shadow is Mine. It is going to be filmed in November by a French film company which just got first prize at the Venice Film Festival. Don't become too American!! Yungmei is nearly over her unhappy romance with that rather dreadful young American, and is back at LSE, studying (at last). I hear you are getting married. Is it true?

With deep affection from
Vincent and myself

Suyin

P.O. Box 6
Bukit Panjang
Singapore

January 2, 1962

Dear Natwar,

It's YOU who owe me a letter; for I answered yours, then got no word in reply. Perhaps the UN is so big that it did not reach you at all. I sent it care of the United Nations, New York....

Now that I have your real address, I hope this one gets you. Thank you so much for your card; mine probably went out to Delhi for you.

How is life in the USA treating you? Remember some four years ago I told you that you would end up in the US!

I have just come back from Cambodia where I did a film with script, dialogues, et al. It was a fascinating and new experience. Today I just finished writing the book too.

It will be published, along with Winter Love, in a single volume. The title of the film and the book is Cast but One Shadow; it is a buddhist film, but along the lines of modern buddhism.

Will you get married soon? Your friend Shirly seemed positive. Since then I have not only broken off with her, but am suing her in court for money she has taken from me and shall we say utilized not quite as one should. She keeps on dropping hints about mysterious Indians in high places who helped her etc. etc. etc.... I think she is a rank opportunist. So glad you're not her friend; what did she do in India? Now she's married a politician here. Poor chap.

I would like to know more about her, as she seems to have so many connections...some people say one thing, others another....and now she tells everyone I'm a British agent; wonders will never cease. At the moment things are a bit in a turmoil here, and I don't particularly relish being called a British agent.

Affectionately, with love from
Vincent and me,

Han Suyin

January 26, 1962

Dear Natwar,

Your friend Dom Moraes* (friend to the Narayans) has I saw in the local newspaper abjured India, insulted Nehru, and asked for a British passport. You may remember the half hour we all spent together with his father, and the terrible argument which I had with his father. When I say terrible, I mean that I enjoyed it, of course.

I could not stomach some of the silly things Dom wrote, particularly as our local newspaper, which hates anything Asian (it is in English, and run by the usual type of people),

*We know each other and that's about all. I can never forgive him for not turning up for his father's funeral in London in 1974.

not only gave his article a half page, but ran a huge picture of Dom's profile, so that he took up one whole page in the Straits Times. I don't know what they did to lionize him in England in certain circles. I suppose now he will write a book called: "Gone Away Forever from the Land of Tyranny and Nehru."

Anyway I am asking Mrs. Russell-King to send you a copy of my open letter to him, which was also published, but with much less fanfare.

I am sorry I forgot to sign my letter to you. My Christmas cards are ALWAYS mailed by Mrs. King, and it is clever of you to recognize her handwriting instead of mine. I was away this year and asked her to sign them for me. I do not, like you, however, feel that this is loathsome. Next year you will get no card at all.

I am signing this, as usual, but I am very tempted not to sign it. After all, what's in a name, especially when one types it, as you do.

Affectionately,

Han Suyin

P.S. I am suing your friend Shirly Gordon for some money which she owes me.

Address: Permanent Mission of India to U.N., 3 East 64th St., New York 21.

37 Montoie Lausanne
August 6, 1979

My dearest Natwar,

I think a lot of you these days, afflicted with the Commonwealth conference, having to put up with E II and all that sort of thing. I do so wish that I could have made myself clear this year to come to visit you; but it is quite possible that now you may be whisked away to Delhi in the new set-

up that looms in India. Anyway, this is just to say that my love and affection for you and Hem remain entire, even if it is not so demonstrative as it ought to be.

I have been reading again your book on EM Forster and once again do thank you for dedicating it to me. You loom in my book which will be published next year in English, this year in French: MY HOUSE HAS TWO DOORS and which is China and me (in that order, please!) from 1949 to 1979. Of course you, your clearminded vision of things between China and India, did an enormous lot to teach me how to live and how to think. Bless you and I shall never forget it.

Much love,

Suyin

37 Montoie Lausanne

June 14, 1980

My dearest Natwar and Hem,

Yes, I was wondering whether I would have the pleasure to see you in Peking; but Islamabad, I am sure, is even more "sensitive", and you will see a lot of the Chinese there. Your role there will no doubt be to make your government see that the Chinese have no intention of using Pakistan against India. You know that Chou Enlai never envisaged this; on the contrary, he fully expected that, one day, there would be a reunion of the subcontinent, which would calm all of India's fears and make India far more friendly to China.

So in Pakistan, I think you have a MOST important role to play. Of course I shall not talk about the Afghan power play. You know far more about it than I do.

I am sending you my book, My House has Two Doors, as I am quite sure that you will enjoy it. It has also a reference to you.

I do intend to have a very long talk with you on Islam. I think the West is purblind. I've just come back from a month in America. It's like being in a rowdy kindergarten where bright children are constantly told not to think, but to play.

Very much love to you and to Hem. I MISS YOU. You

have carved your niche in my life, and so has Hem with her beauty and her mind.

Very fondly,

Suyin

9. LETTERS FROM AHMED ALI*

21-A Faran, Hyder Ali Road,
Karachi 5
April 23, 1963

My dear Natwar Singh,

Thank you for your letter which had been redirected to me. I had written Raja Rao to say that it had got lost and I had been unable to reply. It had got lost, but luckily has turned up from a heap of papers after careful search.

It was most kind of you and Raja to have thought of including me in your considerate venture; and I shall be most happy to share the happiness of felicitating Forster with a tribute on his 85th birthday.

You did not mention the length of the essay you wanted. I have written a short tribute, about 2,200 words in length, and trust that it would meet your requirements. I shall post it by registered air mail in a day or two so that it gets there before the date line. I would like you to show it to Raja.

I have enjoyed reading your review of The Serpent and the Rope and agree entirely with you. My wife had read the book more than twice and is full of praise and admiration. Please tell Raja that though he seldom writes to us he is always close to our hearts.

I would greatly appreciate immediate acknowledgement of the receipt of the Tribute, so that I am reassured it has reached you. I am always afraid of the vagaries of the post.

Yes, we had met during the function connected with Lu Hsun; but also the meeting was so casual and brief. If you happen to pass through Karachi, do telephone me from the airport on 40733; and if you could write in advance or break

*Born in Delhi 1910. Author of *Twilight in Delhi.* At one time Pakistan Ambassador to Morocco. Now lives in Karachi.

journey here we shall be happy to have you with us.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Ahmed Ali

PS. I have lost touch with Iqbal Singh, as letters sent to his London address have brought no response. If you happen to know his latest address, I would like to have it.

Ahmed Ali

Karachi-5
July 14, 1963

My dear Natwar Singh,

I am delighted with your news, and wish you all success with ONLY CONNECT. I shall look forward to seeing it as soon as you are able to send it to me.

Please tell Raja to break his silence and to give us some of his news.

Do you think there is any scope for the sale of Urdu books in the States? I was thinking primarily of Dilli Ki Shaam, the Urdu version of Twilight. Don't our compatriots in the States ever feel nostalgic for their own language?

When do you expect ONLY CONNECT to be out?

I have managed to jot down a sort of biographical sketch you had asked for. I hope it would meet your requirements.

With all good wishes and kind regards, also love to Raja if you see him.

Yours sincerely,

Ahmed Ali

Karachi-5
October 10, 1963

Dear Natwar Singh,

Its a long time since I have heard from you. I hope your book is progressing well, and should be out soon.

Since I wrote to you last, a British Publisher, Peter Owen Ltd. of London, asked to see a new work if I had one. I did have a new novel, and I sent it to him. They have taken it and are bringing it out immediately and it should be out in January-February '64. It is entitled FISHES AND MERMAIDS. Although Peter Owen are themselves agents for America, but I wonder if you could help in the States with all your contacts there. The Illustrated Weekly of India have asked to see the MSS with a view to possible serialisation. That should be great help. I shall let you know if this materialises.

In the meantime, an Urdu daily has succeeded in persuading me to write my memoirs, and publish them in Weekly instalments. I have agreed to write reflective memoirs, and they have started appearing in ANJAM from the 1st of this month. Let's see how long they continue with me and my reflections.

When do you think TO CONNECT will be ready? I shall be grateful if you can have the money your Publishers may pay, sent to London, instead of to Karachi, to be credited in my account there, as I would like to utilise the money earned abroad in England or Europe, as I have not stirred out of Karachi for four years. So, please tell your publishers not to send it here, but keep it for transfer to London.

How is Raja's book doing in the States? I have not heard from him, but I hope he is well, wherever he is.

Do give me your news, and let me know if I can do anything for you here.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

Ahmed Ali

Karachi-5
December 29, 1963

My dear Natwar Singh,

Its a long time since I have heard from you, and do not know what has happened to "TO CONNECT". You had mentioned in your last letter that it was coming out on the 8th of December, but I have not so far received any copy. If it has come out, do please have a copy sent to me by air. The other copies could follow by surface mail. You had also mentioned that it was being published in England as well either by Allen & Unwin or Peter Owen. Has that materialised? I shall be most interested to know.

Peter Owen seem to have decided in favour of OCEAN OF NIGHT for the title of my novel they are publishing, for I had a telegram from Raman of the Illustrated Weekly saying that he is serialising it on twenty third February. I shall be keenly interested in your reaction to the book before it is out, for I suppose the serialisation will precede the publication, and you will have read it in the Illustrated Weekly of India. I should also like to know if there would be any chance for it in America.

In a week or ten days I shall post you a book of poems by a child of six years with illustrations by children which I have just brought out today. Its an experiment that has never been tried anywhere, not that I know of any such experiment. I suppose you still remember your Urdu. In any case I shall paste the English translations over the Urdu, so that you could relate the poems to the illustrations. I shall be keen to know your reactions to the poems, and advice about placing the book in the States, of course, if you find them interesting, and the experiment worthwhile.

I have been thinking of starting a Publishers Agency, hoping that it may pay. I wonder if you could introduce me to some Publishers of America who may be interested in having an agent in this country. I shall be most grateful for this information.

I suppose Raja Rao is still in India. I have seen some of his

things in the Illustrated Weekly. I also learnt from that Weekly that Raja's new novel The Cat, I think, is being published by Longmans.

I hope this finds you in the best of health. With kind regards and all good wishes for the coming year.

Yours sincerely,

Ahmed Ali

Karachi-5
January 13, 1964

My dear Natwar Singh,

Thank you ever so much for both your letters, I am so glad the tribute book is receiving such good notice in the States. My hearty congratulations for the success. The credit goes entirely to you for having conceived and produced the book. But for you the tributes would never have been written.... I am looking forward to seeing the book which I have not received so far. I suppose it is coming by surface mail. Do please let me see the other notices and reviews if it is not too inconvenient...

Yes Forster wrote a nice letter which I reproduce below. But knowing him as you do, I am sure you will not publish it without his permission. I myself would like to see the letters he must have written to the other contributors. Is it possible for you to get hold of them, and send copies to me? Here is the one he wrote to me:

December 24, 1963

My Dear Ahmed,

I am deeply moved by your contribution to the Tribute book. I have just read it and had never expected anything would appear so on the spot and in the heart. You bring back so much to me and so lovingly: I read it too in such an affectionate place — the house of the Buckinghams,

whom you mention. They live at Coventry now and maintain my faith in human relationship — I don't, you know admit that my views of human nature has been invalidated, though economical and political affairs are being led by science at an increasing rate towards disaster. I have been interested lately — (and in an astronomical setting) in the possibility — indeed the probability — of other and non-human forms of life, elsewhere in the universe.

To return to other — and much smaller — things, I am so happy to read about my mother. I don't know whether you got her entirely right, but should like to think you did and she certainly greatly liked you — you even mention an old gardener, Bane. He has recently died, and I have been giving his daughter a wedding present. It was a painting of an old house, West Hackhurst, and it was painted by Bob Buckingham.

"So you see how things still manage to connect!..."

I leave out the rest as its all about Hashim.

I have asked Peter Owen to send you a copy of "Ocean of Night". But the address I have given him is 3E 64th St. you had mentioned in your last letter. I suppose that is your office, and you will surely get the MS. I don't know when Owen will be able to send it to you; but in case your address I have given him is inconvenient could you please let me know or write to Owen himself direct at:

Peter Owen, Esq
C/o Peter Owen Ltd
50 Old Brompton Road
London, S.W. 7

By the way, you had once mentioned that the Forster book was to be published in England too. Has that materialised? I am sure it will be well received.

I am sorry to send this letter in my awful handwriting. But I was just feeling too lazy to type it.

With kind regards and all good wishes.

Yours,

Ahmed Ali

Karachi-5
January 26, 1964

My dear Natwar Singh,

This is only to request you to have a copy of the Tributes book sent by registered air mail as I have not yet received the copy you had had sent at the beginning of the month. Either it has been pinched or is still somewhere on the high seas.

How is the book doing?

You had mentioned that the contributors would be getting some payment. Have they worked out how much it would be? Do let me know.

We are these days experiencing an unprecedented cold wave. Having forgotten the taste of the cold in Karachi we are all naturally feeling it the more.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Ahmed Ali

Karachi
February 5, 1964

My dear Natwar Singh,

I know you must be snowed under at the moment with a great deal of work. That is why I have not heard from you, nor have I received a copy of the Tribute book.

Under separate cover I am sending you a copy of the book of poems I wrote to you about. Although this copy is meant for you, but if you like the poems and the book, I wonder if you could show it to some publishers there who may be interested in publishing it in the States. I would very much like it published there. There are many publishers who bring out children's books; and the Orion Press (to whom I have written) are publishing an anthology of poems written by

children sponsored by UNESCO, and have invited a number of countries to send poems. Macmillans of New York, I believe, are also interested in such works. But then, there may be several of them about whom I know nothing. This copy I am sending is going by air mail, but I am posting another by surface mail, so that you do not lose your personal copy. It's very selfish of me to ask you to do these contacts for me there. But I am sure you will not mind and offer a helping hand generously.

Do write to me when you get a free moment from your work and give me news of yourself and the book.

With kind regards and all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Ahmed Ali

Karachi-5
March 14, 1964

My dear Natwar Singh,

I was delighted with your news of the 2nd printing of the Tributes book. My heartiest congratulations. Does it also mean more money for us? Please ask your Agent to send the money she holds for me to Karachi mentioning that the amount represents royalties otherwise there may be income tax complications and royalties, by a most extraordinary chance, seem to be exempt from income tax here.

Actually I wanted the dollars in America for a Tape Recorder and one or two odds and ends, but there seems to be no one I know going to the US at the moment. Perhaps later there may be some more money in New York and I could get it then.

It was so very nice of you to have shown the book of Deed's poems to Harcourt, Brace, and I am glad the literary editor liked them. If not Harcourt, Brace, perhaps some other publisher may like them well enough to bring them out. I find that Longmans have published a Bengali folk poem, Bombal Das, recently in America. But Knopf would be excellent for a try. I shall post you within the next few days

translations of his later poems which I have only to type out. I am sure you will like some of them, particularly those which display a remarkable political insight.

I shall send you the short stories as soon as I am able to type them out. I find I have lost the translations of one or two, and shall try to search them or do them once again.

It is so kind of you to take all this interest in me at the cost of your own precious time.

With all good wishes,

Yours,

Ahmed Ali

PS. The book did arrive at last – the air mail copy, within four days of your previous letter. I was delighted with its get up and most of the contributions. Mulk Raj Anand's was a bit of a shock though, particularly for its tone of the child having grown up to say what he really felt.... But that is Mulk Raj all over.

Karachi 5
April 5, 1964

My dear Natwar,

About the same time as I had sent you THE WONDER WORLD OF DEED, I had also sent it to Mrs Bonnie R. Crown, Publications Director of the Asia Society of New York. She was away on a tour of the Far East then; and on her return last month wrote to me saying how much she likes the book and would most happily handle it for me. I had quoted to her the opinion of the literary editor of Harcourt, Brace which you had communicated to me. She has now written to say that since she would like to handle the book it would not be proper if someone else also shows it to some publishers, as there would be confusion. As she seems very keen to handle this book, and she has the time and contacts, would you mind if she tries? She tells me that she is most

optimistic about the chances of the publication of the child's work both in magazines and in book form.

Would you therefore be so kind as to give her any suggestions about other publishers etc. You will be pleased to know that THE WONDER WORLD has been awarded the prize for the best illustrations of the year by The National Book Centre here. The children are very pleased, naturally.

I had a letter from EMF telling me that you wanted to censor Mulk Raj Anand's letter, but that he would not let you as he believes in one's freedom to say what he liked. Typical Forsterian grace! I shall write about this in my next letter. What are you working on now, and what have you published since the Tribute book? I wonder if you can find time from your work to do much writing. I had found it most difficult. I much admired you for having written for and edited The Tribute.

With warmest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Ahmed Ali

PS. Mrs Crown's address is:
The Asia Society,
112 East 64th Street, New York 21 N.Y. 10021
Tel. Plaza 1-4210.

I wonder if you ever passed on my request to send me the share of royalties, to your agent. I have not yet heard from her.

A.A.

Karachi-5
June 26, 1964

My dear Natwar,

I have often thought of writing to you, but what with one thing or another and largely a sense of futile despair, born I am sure of inertia, your last letter has remained unanswered... The unexpected tragedy that has overtaken India in the death of Pandit Jawaharlal, the last of the great leaders, makes one wonder if the age of intellectualism in politics has come to an

end. But I hope that better sense prevails and the gaping wound closes to restore sanity to the ailing mind...

Yes, I had read with the greatest pleasure that Raja had been awarded the Sahitya Academy Award for literature. I hope this recognition inspires him to write another book which transcends cultural bounds and deals with the aspirations of humanity for peace and understanding and surcease of pain. Of all of us he is the fittest for the task. But he lives so within himself that he shuns even occasional communication with friends. If he is still in the States and you happen to see him, do give him my love.

Ocean of Night is out, but no reviews seem to have appeared so far. I am sorry you did not care for some of the characters. But then, as you may have noticed, it is primarily a one person novel; and the problem posed necessitates the sleepiness of some Lucknow characters – decay of the social order, and the clash between feudalism and a more modern attitude and way of life. The essential theme, however, is the loss of the heart symbolised in the Nameless One, and the failure of our generation, frustrated and disillusioned, to follow its behests and even to recognise it. It is a novel in a different key, and hardly a book to be read in serial form. But I grant that its canvas is limited as compared to Twilight in Delhi though in the same measure deeper, looking inwards, as the earlier one had looked outside on wider fields. In the next novel the problem would be different, of Good and Evil against the background of diplomatic life set in Peking. In my experience it is Evil that triumphs in spite of Christ and Gandhi and even God. But I do not know if I shall even be able to write it, situated as I am in my present difficult circumstances.

But no more of that. Each one of us must work out his destiny, preordained as in the doctrine of Karma or running its course in the material conflicts of existence in this world. And no one can help when the tide has turned against a man, and the wheels of Time grind everything down to indistinguishable dust...

I hope you are well and are perhaps working on some other project. What about editing an anthology of Indian short stories, including all important languages of the sub-

continent. No such anthology seems to exist; and I have no doubt you could do a much needed service. I am sure with your contacts you could not only interest some publisher in the venture but perhaps also get a subsidy from some international organisation.

The Indian English novel also needs a good introduction to the English speaking world, and you could perhaps invite some British and American critics to write an essay on each one of us.

You may revolve these suggestions in your mind, and I am sure some good may eventually come of it.

With kind regards and all good wishes.

Yours,

Ahmed Ali

PS. 27th June.

I have just read a news item date-lined New York which says that an Afghan American Ataullah K. Ozai-Durrani who died in May has left about ½ M. US $ for translation of Ghalib and Mir into English and for studies of their works and lives. You know my life long interest in precisely these 2 poets and my translations of their poems. According to the will this bequest is to go to Harvard University or some such "non-profit institution" for the translations into English. His lawyers are: Hays, Saint John, Abramson and Hailbron of 120 Broadway. These translations were to be a memorial to his friend Syed Husain, who was also a friend of my family. Do you think something could be done so that my selection of Ghalib (Mss complete) could be published under the bequest and I could get the commission to work on his life, as well as that of Mir.

Ahmed Ali

Karachi-5
July 15, 1981

Dear Natwar,

Yesterday's note was scribbled in a hurry. You must have received and read the Review of **Suraj Mal**. Though your

book is short, its canvas is so wide, the whole of the Eighteenth century, that I had almost bogged down. There was so much to read and ponder. Luckily Iqbal Siddiqui, whom you know, came to my aid. He has read so much on the history of the period that he should have been a Professor at a University, and not lost in business even though it brings him a good deal of money. Without his help and insight into the period the review would have been so inadequate and unsatisfactory.

I do hope you liked it, even though I could not help disagreeing with you over the question of Culture. In fact, the Review was getting more and more unmanageable with the ever-unfolding problems of the 18th century as they unravelled in your treatment of the subject. So my greatest problem was to cut it down and go on pruning. That is why a number of things could not even be touched. It is just as well. Otherwise the Review may well have become a sequel to your book, or, in any case, its historical background in more detail than your subject, the biography of one of the important actors in the drama, permitted you.

I do not know when you will come to Karachi next. Unless one sits in the study, and has some leisure, many literary and current problems that keep on arising, can not be discussed. Your last visit was so packed with your official preoccupations that we met only hurriedly.

By the way, what did you do about my ms on Communism? Did you have time, or did you remember, to discuss it with Ravi Dayal? He has not bothered to write to me though he has had a copy of that work for over a year. In any case, let me know, and if it is hopeless, return it to me. Did you have time to see the Vikas Press people in Delhi? Hope the family is well. My daughter is going to Texas for her vacations — subject to receipt of a US visa, for which she has at the moment gone to US consulate general.

With remembrances to your wife.

Yours,

Ahmed Ali

March 18, 1982

For Natwar from Ahmed

ON THE DEPARTURE OF AN OLD FRIEND

It was in China we had met.
How ten and twenty years have passed!
Time flies like waters flowing on
Towards the sea everlastingly.

My bones will decay and soon be dust;
But memory may perhaps preserve
The testimony of hearts that felt
The change of Ch'in and Han,
The march of dynasties
Reversing the march of time,
Today's enshrouding fog
Emerging as the mist of dawn.

Our beginnings and our ends
Are only gossamers
That History weaves around our minds!

Ahmed Ali

Ahmed recited this poem for me at a farewell dinner in Karachi in March 1982.

10. LETTERS FROM SHAUN MANDY*

The Illustrated Weekly of India
Bombay
October 25, 1956

My dear Natwar Singh,

Many thanks for your letter of the 30th September, which I found most interesting.

I read your article on R.K. Narayan in "Quest" and enjoyed it very much. It is extremely well written. Incidentally Narayan was in here the other day on his way to America on a Rockfeller scholarship. I had not seen him since 1948 when I spent a day with him in Mysore. He is a pleasant, modest individual.

I greatly envy you your stay in Peking, a city which I have always longed to visit. I have been to Shanghai twice but never got further north. I disliked that cosmopolitan city in the old days.

An illustrated article on Chih Pai Shih† would be most acceptable.

In the matter of book reviews, I am afraid it would be rather difficult to send them to Peking even by Diplomatic Bag. Several London publishers recently urgently protested that reviews of their books do not appear swiftly, but as we get 70 books from London a month, and our space is limited, it is not an easy job to achieve topicality.

I was interested in your mention of Han Suyin.... Perhaps I am a little prejudiced against Han Suyin, as I knew Ian Morrison very well. We used to lunch daily when we were together in Kandy at SEAC during the war years. He was a very nice person and, of course, Han Suyin's novel capitalizes on their extraordinary love affair.

I have seen Krishna Hutheesing several times lately and will

*C.R. Mandy, Editor of *The Illustrated Weekly of India* for many years.
†Famous Chinese painter. Died 1957 at the age of 97.

convey your salaams to her.
In great haste,

Sincerely,

C.R. Mandy

PS. There is an American Seminar on in Bombay now. Allen Tate, a rather good poet has given some interesting talks but the audience of professors and lecturers seemed dead from the neck up!

Bombay
February 26, 1957

My dear Natwar,

Thank you for your letter of the 12th February. Your short story "The Party" is appearing in our issue for the 10th of March and proofs passed my desk yesterday. I will see that copies are sent to the addresses you mention.

Why don't you send me a 'Vignette of Peking,' under a pseudonym if necessary?

I had luncheon with Krishna Hutheesing yesterday, a farewell party for some friends of hers – champagne supplied, which is becoming a rarity in this dry and moribund city! Delhi, however, is not too lively. I was up there last week. The weather was lovely but people have to drink in their rooms, which I think is quite horrid. All the bars are closed.

I have not seen Minoo Masani for some time now. I believe he is standing for a safe seat in an Adivasi area near Ranchi. Actually I do not see a great deal of him because I am basically anti-American and he practically lives in the fur-lined pockets of the Yanks!

With best wishes. In haste,

Yours sincerely,

C.R. Mandy

Bombay
July 2, 1958

My dear Natwar,

I am hurriedly writing you a letter of apology about the way your two colour transparencies have come out. I am really shocked at the result. They were good pictures and in an earlier proof the one of the boat came out fairly well. But in adjusting colours on the cylinders it has gone out of registration, and as for Han Suyin, her complexion has come out altogether jaundiced.

Please convey my apologies to her. These things happen and it may possibly be due to the extreme dampness of the last week, which can affect our rotogravure reproduction. I was so looking forward to first-class results here. Actually they got the colours of the screen in the Han Suyin picture quite well done.

All the best,

Yours sincerely,

C.R. Mandy

PS. Have just been sent "The Mountain is Young" by Indira Talyarkhan. No copy has come from London as yet.

Bombay
July 8, 1958

My dear Natwar,

Many thanks for yours of the 7th July. By a coincidence I have just got through "The Mountain is Young" and thoroughly agree with what you say. I am doing a piece in my Books Gossip about it and shall mention therein that a review will be appearing. So if you send me same I will use it early. Our limit is about 600 words. As the book will be coming from London (Jonathan Cape send us most of their books without fail) it will be quite in order. I found it much too long though the descriptive detail is lovely on the whole.

The sex is almost as frank as "Lady Chatterley's Lover", but it is a readable narrative.

When you are next writing to Han Suyin, tell her that I should like to meet her very much in Singapore in November if she is there.

Yes, I thought Datta's article on Forster was very good.

My salaams to Chaudhuri.

All the best,

Sincerely,

C.R. Mandy

Bombay
August 6, 1958

My dear Natwar,

Many thanks for yours of the 2nd August and for the review which, alas, arrived too late for the next Books page, which has just been put to bed. However, I shall use it shortly.

I was interested to hear that Han Suyin will be coming to Delhi in September. I shall certainly be able to get up for a week-end, leaving here on Friday night and returning on Sunday. Please let me know a little ahead and it will be delightful if we could have a party with her and the others you mention.

I note you say you are feeling miserable. I am in a similar state here with a heavy monsoonish cold!

All the best,

Sincerely,

Shaun

PS. I note in your review you believe all the women surrender themselves to Unni in flesh and spirt. I take it the last word is not meant!

Bombay
September 9, 1958

Dear Natwar,

Thank you for yours of the 7th. I should like very much to meet Han Suyin on her way back to Singapore. Actually I shall be in Singapore towards the end of November and will try and see her there but an earlier meeting in Delhi would be nice.

I see they are making a film of "The Mountain Is Young", with Audrey Hepburn and Marlon Brando in the leading parts. This seems to be terrible miscasting. I think Anne Ford's part might have suited Deborah Kerr.

Thank you for the colour transparencies. I am keeping the one of the bronze lion, Peking, but I am afraid it will be a considerable time before I can use it as I have a big backlog of colour material to work off. I am using your picture of the Chinese gentleman in our issue for 28th September.

I read "Face to Face" in the American edition. Though I admired Ved Mehta very much for his courage and accomplishment I did not care for his character as it emerged from the book. He seemed to me rather unpleasant on the whole. The American part of the book I did not care for at all.

The monsoon continues down here and we are already 60 inches surplus – quite horrible!

All the best,

Sincerely,

Shaun

Bombay
September 29, 1958

Dear Natwar,

Many thanks for yours of the 26th. I am rather desolated to hear that Han Suyin will not be in Delhi till the 25th October, as it will be too late for me to see her there then, for that will be the week I have to get finally fixed up here with Income tax clearance, etc., prior to going to Singapore.

It would be too much of a rush, but I shall certainly see her in Singapore. Please tell her about me and give me her address.

I was out for the day at the seaside at Marve last week with Krishna and Raja. Krishna is looking very well and we were talking of you, as I had a copy of the "Weekly" there with your picture of the Chinese Gentleman in it, which I think has come out very well. We were also talking of Han Suyin and somebody in the party said she was going to marry an Indian Army man, the original of Unni Menon in her Nepal novel. Is this true? I did not even know she was separated from her husband in Malaya.

It is not likely that I will be up in Delhi until January. Please remember me to Biren De – a very nice person – and to any of the other artists. Have you met Sailoz Mukherjea, a little waif of a man, who was once a very good painter but drink got him long ago and has made him a bit ferrety and rather negligible. Yet he still has charm.

Please also remember me to Nirad Chaudhuri, Khushwant Singh and Prawer Jhabvala, whose serial, "Esmond in India", I am starting next week. Esmond reminds me, in some ways, of Charles Fabri, though I do not think he is modelled on that aggressive but not displeasing character, so it may be all pure Fabrication! I end with this elusive pun!

All the best,

Yours sincerely,

Shaun

Bombay
December 12, 1958

My dear Natwar,

Many thanks for yours. I have been back a week after a most enjoyable holiday. You know I have a Mongoloid complex and like the people of the Far East better than any other in the world. The Straits Chinese and the Malays are particularly pleasant – healthy, honey-coloured and cheerful, and I saw very little of poverty. I am writing in "Gallimaufry" a Malayan diary for three issues and you will be able to

gather my impressions from it.

Han Suyin was altogether delightful. I liked her very much. I had tea with her at the Adelphi and she came to a luncheon I gave at the Elizabethan grill in Raffles. Rita Dar and her husband also came. I had not seen her since I met her at Krishna's a couple of years ago. I thought Han Suyin quite beautiful.

On my way to Malaya, I stopped for four days at my Island. It was quite enchanting and I much look forward to getting down there in April and to enter into residence there next September. It will be an excellent place to do some creative writing.

I am struggling here to get things sorted out, with an accumulation of mail. If you can send me the Forster article at your earliest, we might be able to get it in the 4th January issue which comes out on the 1st of January. So it would be topical. It will be too late for the 28th December issue. A photograph would be acceptable.

Saluti.

Shaun

K. NATWAR-SINGH was born in Bharatpur, Rajasthan on 16 May 1931. He obtained First Class Honours in History from St. Stephen's College, Delhi. He spent two years at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and studied Chinese at Peking University. He joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1953. His foreign assignments have taken him to China, the United Nations; he has been Ambassador to Poland and Pakistan. He also served as Deputy High Commissioner, London, and High Commissioner, Zambia. From 1966 to 1971, he was attached to the Prime Minister's Secretariat. He was Secretary-General of the 7th Non-Aligned Summit held in Delhi in March, 1983 and most recently, Chief Co-ordinator of the Commonwealth Summit.

His publications include: **E.M. Forster: A Tribute, The Legacy of Nehru, Tales from Modern India** and **Maharaja Suraj Mal.**

He married Heminder Kaur of Patiala in 1961. They have a son and a daughter.